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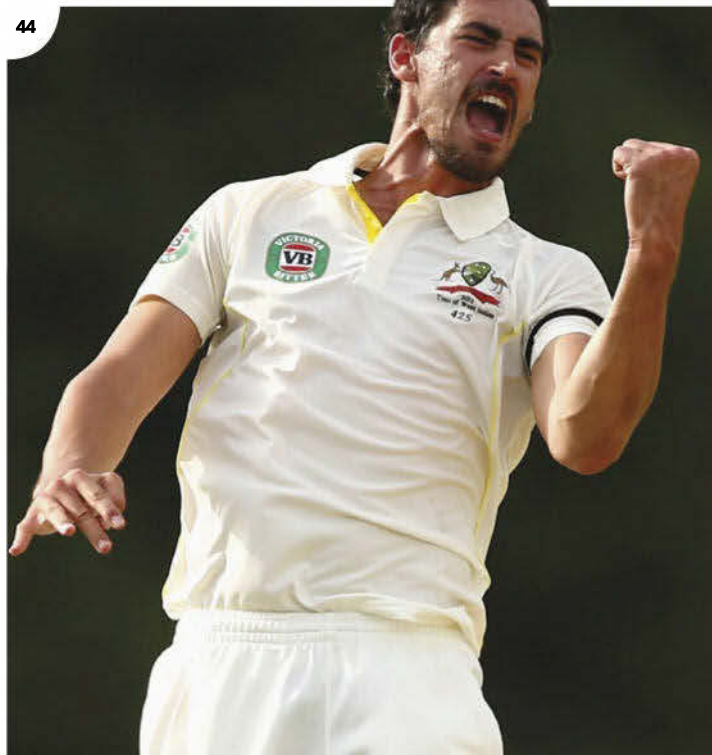
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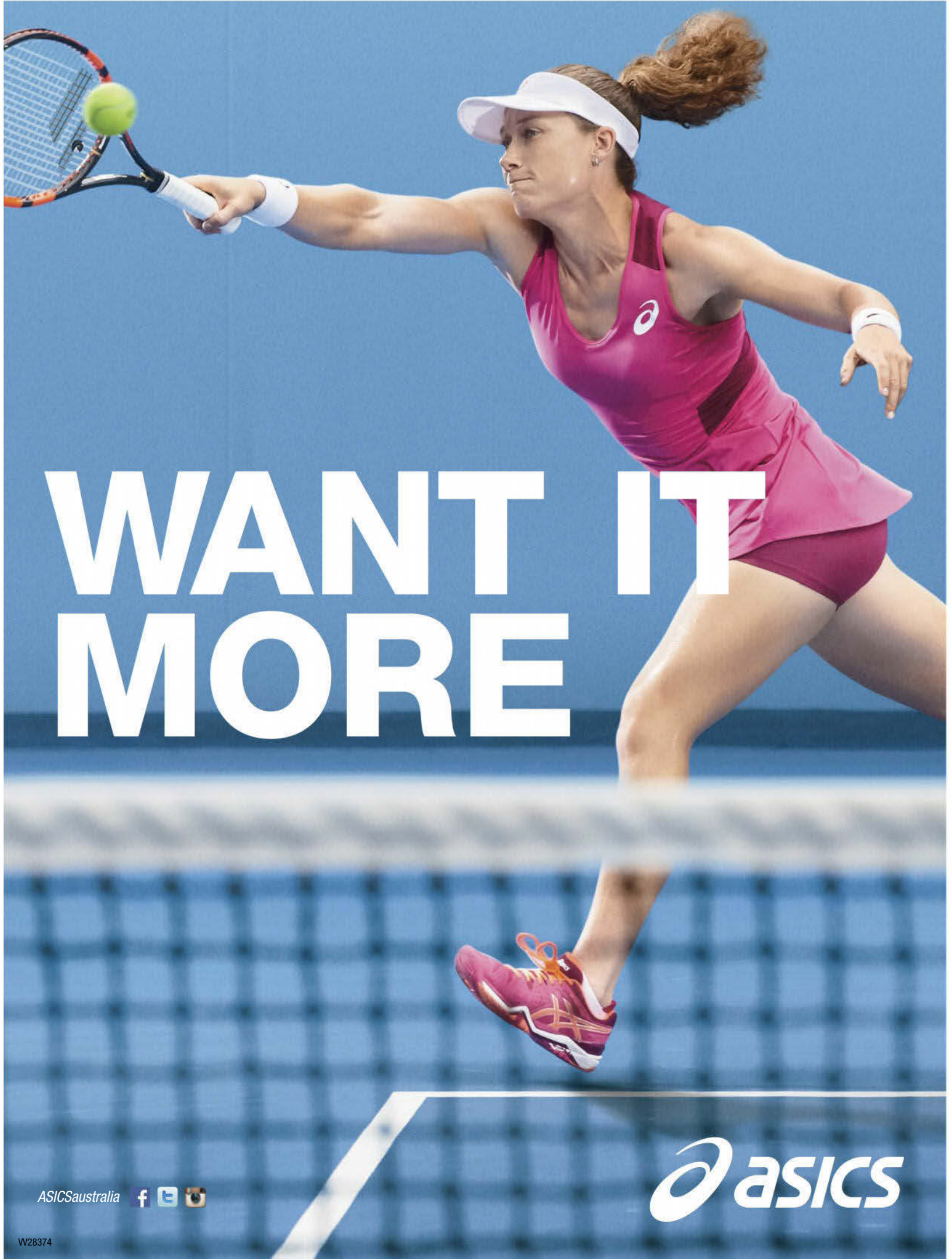
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HOW'S THIS FOR AN ELECTION PLATFORM? OPEN UP FIFA'S BOOKS TO THE WORLD FOR ALL TO SEE.



IT'S SHAPING as a huge month for world sport, after a particularly tempestuous 12 months. Hopefully, some kind of positive "climate change" is upon us.

The disgusting behaviour of the venal thieves who have ruled world football was well and truly exposed in 2015, and we trust the events of last year (arrests, prosecutions and jail time for half the executive committee, with more to come) becomes a tipping point for the corrupt body that is FIFA. With elections for a new president due this month (February 26), we await the delegates' decision with bated breath.

Several of the candidates come to the table with oodles of baggage, and obvious vested interests. Will we see more of the same of the Blatter-Havelange era? Does world football know any different? If there has been one theme of the last 30 years, it is that officialdom in this sport has, at the most senior level, been characterised by disgusting self-interest parading with absurd vanity.

This is a real test for the world's biggest sport. There have been plenty of calls for the disbanding of FIFA – burn it down and start again, with its headquarters situated not behind walls of secrecy in Switzerland but in the clear air of the United States. Why not? This is where the sport's major sponsors are headquartered, and this is where corporate governance has (don't laugh) its spiritual home.

Then, elect new leaders. How's this for an election platform? Open up FIFA's books to the world for all to see. Post their accounts (ALL of them) on websites. Reveal what officials are paid, and reveal what they spend. It really IS that easy. These notions of commercial-in-confidence arrangements between the sport and sponsors? Ditch them.

And how's this one? When deciding the host city for a World Cup, actually have a look at the details of the bid and see what temperature the games are likely to be played in! No more secret ballots. Hold the bidding country to the dates they propose, so that players' health and well-being is considered first and foremost.

When receiving bids for broadcast rights, publish the proposals. Let the rest of us see the numbers. Then stage an open vote.

Australian voices have been among the loudest in the push for a new FIFA. Many more around the world have *joined* the push by signing a petition at www.newfifanow.org Get on board.

In the meantime, play on.

Graem Sims
Editor

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INSIDE TWITTER

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WORLDBEATERS?

While I agree with the majority of your "2015 Worldbeaters" (December 2015 issue), I find the inclusion of David Pocock over better-credentialed Australian athletes puzzling. For starters, the term "worldbeater" suggests the athlete has achieved something that proves they are superior to their contemporaries.

Let me clarify: I thought David Pocock and the Wallabies had an outstanding Rugby World Cup and I am just as proud of their efforts as the next Australian. However, the Wallabies DID NOT win a major trophy this year and David Pocock DID NOT win any awards recognising his international



achievements in 2015. Heck, Pocock was not even recognised as the best player in his country ...

In your editor's letter, you claim your selections "won more, or stood out more because they beat everybody, from all over the planet". Did you adhere to this criterion when comparing Mitchell Starc to Pocock? I think you will find the Australian cricket team won the ODI World Cup for their respective sport. I think you will find Starc was named the player of the One-Day World Cup and held top spot in the ICC ODI Bowling rankings. I think you will also find cricket is played just as globally as rugby union ...

Hopefully you abide by the standards you have set yourself when next compiling a list of this nature.

– Nathan Bicerra, North Rocks, NSW

NEW FORMAT

The Friday afternoon start and Sunday evening climatic finish to the Adelaide day-night Test provided perfect scheduling for spectators and TV audiences. This timing could be almost guaranteed in future matches if authorities were to introduce a new hybrid Test/limited-over format of the game. Here is how it could work:

Matches would be limited to 300 overs, played from Friday to Sunday.

Each team's first innings would consist of up to 100 overs, allowing Test-like aggregates of around 400 to be scored.

The second innings would be limited to 50 overs, unless a team was dismissed in the first innings before 100 overs were bowled. If this was the case, the additional overs available would be added equally to each team's second innings, to bring the overall match aggregate overs to 300.

With one-day cricket now struggling for relevance and Test cricket only attracting attention in the Boxing Day to January season (the only period in which the audience has the spare time to absorb it), this new structure may have

more audience appeal than one-day cricket and non-holiday period Test matches.

– Brad Matthews, Como, NSW

WORLDBEATERS II

My first impression of Australia's Top Ten Sportspeople of 2015 was how uncompetitive the sports listed are on the world stage.

Australia is one of the few countries that takes swimming seriously. Netball and cricket are the domain of the old Commonwealth countries, while the football codes are ignored by large parts of the world.

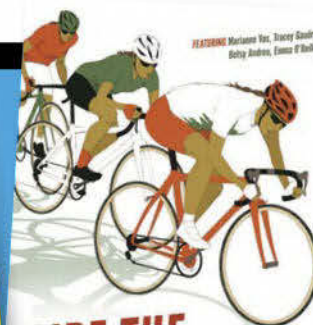
My nomination for inclusion in the top ten is Rohan Dennis. His results in 2015 included two Stage wins in the Tour de France! Dennis has also had Overall and Stage wins and placings in France, USA, Belgium and Australia and also broke the World One Hour Record. Like the golf and basketball nominations, cycling is a highly competitive sport on the world stage.

– Tim Glennen, Bundoora, Vic

WRITE & WIN

Our letter-writer-of-the-month is Nathan Bicerra, who wins a copy of *Benaud In Wisden* and *Ride The Revolution*. Drop us a line, either to our mailing address or at insidesport@insidesport.com.au – or hit "Comebacks" on our website and you could WIN too.

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Winners & Losers



LOSER

Sport has made a big show of anti-violence-against-women initiatives, such as White Ribbon, but the rhetoric has often fallen far short when it has come to taking action on the issue. And the latest flashpoint involving Richmond Tigers' star **Dustin Martin** became a litmus test for the AFL. Argue about particulars – why weren't police involved sooner, etc – but the fact remains, and was admitted by Martin, that a confrontation took place in which he made threats. The point wasn't lost on anybody that the AFL and the Tigers were going to be protective of a player as good as Martin – as Richmond legend Kevin Bartlett said on radio, this isn't "player no.42 on the club list". For the many reasons to be cynical about sports and their attitudes toward violence against women, this is among of the worst of them: that the response too often has less to do with the incident, and more to do with how expendable the player is.



LOSER

Of all the laments about the decline of **West Indian cricket**, this summer might have been the saddest of them all. The worst-case scenarios were realised, and the ultimate indignity awaits – future Windies' tours here relegated to the off-peak of winter in the Northern Territory and north Queensland. That's where Zimbabwe and Bangladesh are meant to go, not the grand cricketing force that gave us Worrell, Sobers, Viv, Lara and an unyielding battery of fast bowlers. It has become difficult to explain to younger cricket fans just how formidable, yet also how appealing, the teams from the Caribbean used to be. And that might be the worst realisation of all about the unravelling of the West Indies – that the greatness the Calypso Kings achieved in the mid-to-late 20th century was a phenomenon unique in its time and place, a talent bloom that was destined to fade not just to mediocrity, but worse. When people talk of restoring the West Indies to glory, they might be starting with a mistaken assumption: with the way modern cricket (and the sporting world at large) operates, is it natural that the West Indies be a top-tier contender?



WINNER

For our sporting tastes, the English Premier League suffers for its long-run predictability (as do most other European football leagues). Which is why the rise of **Leicester City** is truly one of the best sports stories to come along recently. Only five sides have ever won the title since the EPL's beginnings in 1992, and you know the names, maybe even the odd one in Blackburn Rovers. It would seem impossible with the amount of money at the top of the game that a side of more meagre resources could win it, but credit to Claudio Ranieri and his team for making it a believable possibility. And no matter what might happen, watching the free-scoring Foxes and their pair of Jamie Vardy (left) and Riyad Mahrez has been all kinds of fun.



WINNER

It is unfortunate that the **proposals to reform WADA** have become necessary, but with the state of sporting governance at present, they represent a step forward. The plan put forward by IOC chief Thomas Bach (above) has three main elements: an independent unit within WADA that would take over testing from the individual sports; an intel-gathering unit that would lead an active anti-doping effort; and the system of sanctions to run through the Court of Arbitration for Sport. There are plenty of issues to get across here – the amount of funding for anti-doping would have to increase into the hundreds of millions, the ceding of power to outside authorities would make any Essendon fan shudder, and many observers say that this framework couldn't be ready for another three years at least. But the collusion of drug cheats with corrupt bureaucracy or brand-protecting organisations has collapsed public confidence in clean competition, and requires this kind of response.

WINNER

Pity the poor coach of the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers, **Brett Brown**. The former Aussie Boomers and NBL coach (right) has been saddled with one of the worst jobs in sports – for the last couple of years, his team has been engaged in a bold experiment of judicious quasi-tanking. The 76ers' bosses call it "the Process", and their reasoning goes that you need a superstar player to build an NBA champion around. So until they land one, they'll deal away the talent they have for younger, cheaper players, and improve their draft and trade positions. They've managed to piss off almost everybody in the league doing this, even as the team has endured two of the worst losing streaks in NBA history and dropped 18 games straight to start this season. So how can there be a winner amid all this? Well, Philly made a *good* decision in extending Brown's contract, recognising that he's handled this situation with the utmost class.



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➔ The ultimate in 13 seconds of action: flamboyant Irishman Conor McGregor backed up his talk in the much-hyped UFC194 bout against Jose Aldo, as McGregor claimed the title from the featherweight champ with one left-hand shot.

FREEZE FRAME

⬇ "Now, when I say break ..." Anthony Joshua (right) and Dillian Whyte kept going after the round-one bell, and ref Howard Foster almost copped one. Joshua, who won via stoppage in the 7th, said he would have kept punching if not for Foster.



PHOTOS BY Getty Images





↑ Buoy being buoys: Cambridge's "Tideway" crew did not go gently down the stream, rowing into a buoy during the Newton Women's University Boat Race Trial 8's event held on the Thames.

↓ What's Russian for don't argue? Ekaterina Vorontsova of Russia attempts to break the tackle of Australia's Ellia Green at the Emirates Dubai Rugby Sevens. The Aussies beat the Russians in the final, 31-12.





➔ We're looking for a word to express our appreciation of West Indian Darren Bravo's century against Australia during the Hobart Test. How about: kudos.

⬇ Adam Voges embraced Shaun Marsh after notching up his double century at Blundstone, on their way to a partnership of 449 that fell just short of the all-time Australian Test mark.





WIN Think you can write a funnier caption for this pic than our humour-challenged *Inside Sport* staffer? Check out page 89 for your chance to prove your wit and win stuff.

↑ Here's another intricate NFL skill that Jarryd Hayne is yet to master. Injured Minnesota Viking Phil Loadholt toots the horn before his team's game against Seattle, but the Seahawks did all the blowing out, winning 38-7.

↓ Deflate *this*, Tom: Connor Barwin and the Philadelphia Eagles took the air out of Tom Brady and the New England Patriots, as Philly rallied from 14 points down on the road to upset the defending Super Bowl champs.





↑ "I swear that my horse was just there ..." Jockey Aidan Coleman found himself separated from mount Acajou Des Bieffes after only the first flight of hurdles in The bet365 Novices' Hurdle Race at Newbury in England.

↓ Beach holidays become a lost less fun when you're an AFL rookie. Jack Silvagni, son of Stephen, embarks upon learning the family business during Carlton's preseason training at Kurrawa Beach on the Gold Coast.





↑ German gymnast Pauline Tratz bent over backwards in her efforts on the vault during the DTL Finals 2015 in Karlsruhe, Germany. Tratz's Karlsruhe-Soellingen club couldn't stop Stuttgart from tumbling to victory.

↓ Japan's Nozomi Okuhara overshadowed the competition at the BWF Dubai World Superseries 2015 Finals, as the 20-year-old from Nagano won the season-ending event, and shaped as a badminton medal favourite for Rio.

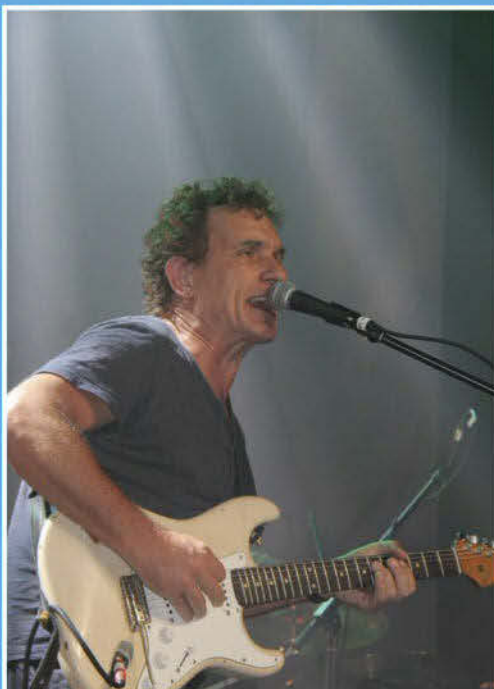


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"It's a Hamburg disaster – what is the future sporting vision of the people in the country, for which I fight? The vision of McDonald's and unfit, fat children? Probably?"

– Olympic discus champion Robert Harting, really upset by the rejection of a 2024 Games bid by the citizens of Hamburg.

"I can't remember the last time I watched golf. I can't stand it. Unless one of my friends has a chance to win, then I like watching it. I watched Jason [Day] win the PGA. But it was on mute."

– Tiger Woods, in a revealing interview with *Time*.

"I'm grinding my butt off and I said, 'Okay, you're the No. 1 player in the world and you just lost eight balls on a home course that you could play blindfolded,' and I shot a 54. This is going to be an interesting week."

– Woods, in the same interview, recalling a nine-hole round he played just before he headed to the 2008 US Open in California, which he famously won on a broken leg.

"Runs were not important. We did sit down and discuss the plan and blocking was the best way forward to tackle the challenge."

– South African opening batsman Temba Bavuma, on the Proteas' epic stonewalling in their fourth Test against India, in which Hashim Amla scored six runs off 113 balls.

"I think they are very nice when they're walking around that ring holding them cards ... I think she's good, she's won quite a few medals for Britain, she slaps up good as well, when she's got a dress on she looks quite fit."

– Heavyweight champion Tyson Fury, when asked about women in boxing and British heptathlete Jessica Ennis-Hill.

"You cannot be a dickhead and win Sports Personality of the Year."

– BBC journalist Clive Myrie, on Tyson Fury.

"I've never liked anyone saying that without them the game doesn't exist, because it's just garbage ... None of us would actually exist without the actual game. If we all walked away from



WINDED

"It's very depressing, very sad when you know what the West Indies were like ... What eventuated was a load of rubbish, it was really lacklustre. The body language was terrible. There are a couple of blokes there who need a good kick up the backside. I feel sorry for Jason Holder. It is ridiculous to give such a young man the captaincy."

– Ian Chappell, on what we all feared about the latest West Indian touring side.

"Marlon has that pretty laid-back attitude, the Jamaican Chris Gayle, Marlon Samuels-type attitude; that's one thing. But when you're on the field as the most senior player in the team? ... You really expect him to show a bit more interest in what's going on. He was almost a spectator out on the boundary."

– West Indian commentator Fazeer Mohammed, on Marlon Samuels.

"The Caribbean and Tasmania are as far apart as the disenchanting players are from the WICB."

– The voice of West Indian cricket, Tony Cozier.



TWENTY QUESTIONS

"I haven't really had time to get a set technique, so I'm just going out there and having a swing. It was good to get some runs on the board."

– Former junior tennis champion Ash Barty, now making a go of it in the Women's BBL with the Brisbane Heat.

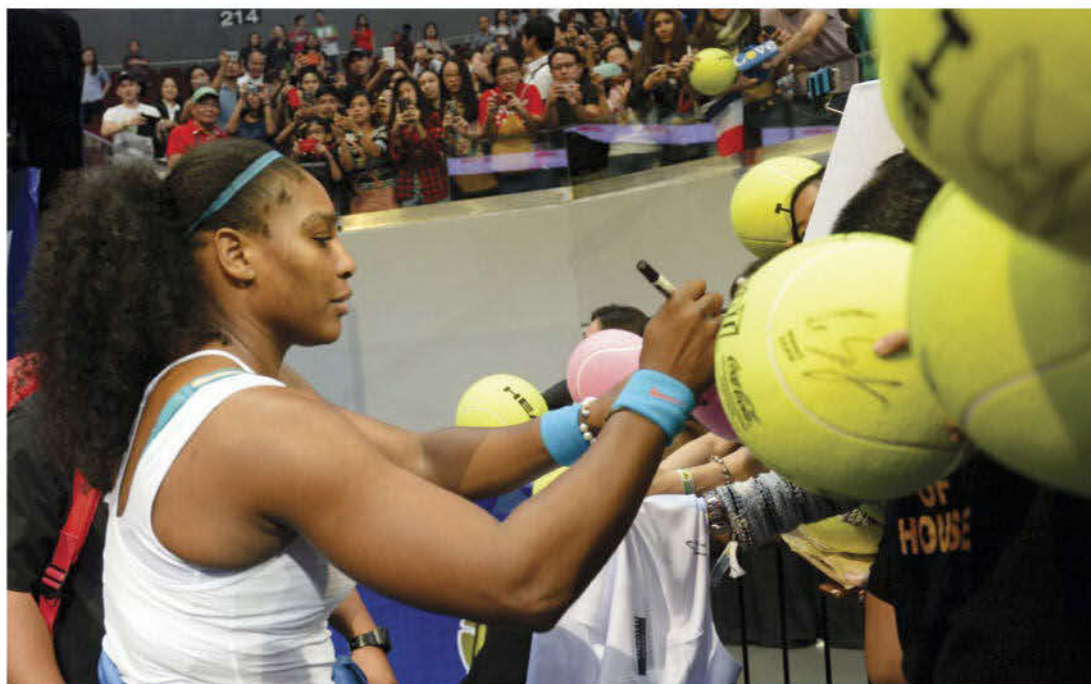
"There's a market that's dedicated to watching cricket there. I wouldn't wait ten years. I wouldn't

wait ten minutes. I'd just be doing it."

– Former Australian Test batsman Matthew Hayden, who played in the Shane Warne All-Star Series, on the potential of cricket in the US.

"I pretty much think the enjoyment level of Twenty20 is pretty exciting. Playing in front of a 50,000-packed house is a lot more fun than a half-baked arena."

– Brad Hodge (above), on cricketers forsaking playing Tests for T20 careers.



SIDES OF SERENA

"I didn't run the whole way this year, but next year I will."

– Serena Williams, after ditching the last three kilometres of her 5k charity run, which she finished in a taxi.

"For Sports Illustrated to recognise my hard work, dedication and sheer determination with this award gives me hope to continue on and do better."

– Serena, after becoming the first female athlete in 32 years to be named the US magazine's sportsperson of the year.

NATIVE TONGUES

"I think we need a rematch. It wasn't really a fight."

– UFC fighter Jose Aldo, after losing to Conor McGregor in 13 seconds. It was later resolved that the translator gave a bad interpretation of the Portuguese.

"They are two goals very difficult to accept, big frustration to accept, because I feel like my work was betrayed, if it's the right word. All last season I did phenomenal work and I brought them to a level that is not their level."

– Ex-Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho (right), who unlike Aldo, can actually speak English as well as Portuguese.



it, the game would still go on, because there'd be a couple of kids in a park somewhere playing it. I don't like that notion that a certain group is above the game."

– Socceroos coach Ange Postecoglou, on the supporters' boycotts of the A-League.

"It might be three to six months before I can eat an apple, let alone take an impact."

– Ronda Rousey, on the time frame for a rematch with Holly Holm ...

"It is embarrassing. You don't want to come out of the house. People are questioning you. If you strip it back, this squad needs a hard look."

– Former Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand, on how Man U's elimination from Europe is crimping his social life.

"I'm pretty sure it had nothing to do with Jimmy wanting to leave. If he wanted to leave, he would have got out whether he had those contract problems or not."

– Greg Bird, on whether a Gold Coast Titans official forging James Roberts' signature contributed to driving the player from the team.

"I feel good. Fresh as lettuce."

– NFL star Tom Brady, skilled with metaphors.

"I'll never embrace it. I don't think it's basketball. I think it's kind of like a circus sort of thing. Why don't we have a five-point shot? A seven-point shot?"

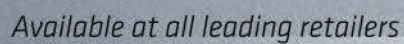
– San Antonio Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, noted curmudgeon.

"A lot of the Queenslanders are probably of the opinion: 'Who cares? Give us one of them. We're happy with either.'"

– Wally Lewis, on who the next Queensland Origin coach will be.

"The main reason I'm playing this sport right now is because I'm fat and I don't like running very far."

– University of Utah punter and Melbourne native Tom Hackett, expressing the quintessentially Aussie view of American football. Hackett won an award for best at his position this college season.



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Scoreboard



HONOUR ROLL

► Our *Honour Roll* is usually reserved exclusively for those who earn the "world champion" tag, but we're going to make an exception for **Mick Fanning**, who is in our eyes a champion in every respect except that one small detail. His pursuit of his fourth World Surf League champion's title came down to a nail-biting finish at the Billabong Pipe Masters in Hawaii in December. Fanning entered the tournament with just a slim points lead in the year-long race and was one of five possible world champs, depending on how the cards fell. Though he didn't win the event, tipped out in the semi-finals, he came within a whisker – in the most dramatic and emotional of circumstances. As he entered the third elimination round in epic conditions, it was revealed that he had earlier that day learned of the death of his older brother back home in Australia. He was able to win through the two heats that same day, then come back the next morning to defeat 11-time world champion Kelly Slater in the quarter-finals. He led his semi-final against reigning world champion Gabriel Medina until the last few minutes when a "Hail Mary" aerial manoeuvre caught the judges' eye and gave Medina the nod. Fanning's main rival, Brazil's Adriano de Souza, was able to win through to the final and claim the world title.

But this is the man who earlier in the year had fought off a shark attack in the Jeffreys Bay final in South Africa. In



fact, Fanning lost another brother in a dreadful car accident when he was a teenager, and has devoted his three world championships to his memory. Fanning showed astonishing class and grace in congratulating his rivals, and won the highest esteem from all sports-lovers well beyond the surfing realm.

If *that* doesn't qualify him, well, the week earlier he won an event called the Vans "World Cup of Surfing" at Sunset Beach in heavy conditions – though that event doesn't count on the WSL Tour.

NEXT?

The 1987 Australian Open was the last to be played on the grass courts of Kooyong, in Melbourne; appropriately, Australia's favourite tennis son, Pat Cash, would figure in the final against Swede Stefan

Edberg and attempt to become the first Australian to win the men's title since Mark Edmondson in 1976. Cash was renowned for his fighting spirit, but in a match dominated by serve-volley exchanges, he looked to be comprehensively outplayed by the Swede, and was soon down two sets to love, 6-3 6-4. But with a partisan local crowd yelling its support, Cash clawed his way back into the match. He won the third set 6-3. And then, even more dramatically, the fourth, 7-5. The match was tied and the audience at fever pitch as they came out for the fifth and deciding set. What happened next? (Answer page 89)

The Quiz

- 1 In 2008, which NBA team became the fourth in the league to have a nickname not ending with an "S"?
- 2 Who is the number-one-ranked darts player in the world?
- 3 American Alan Gelfand invented what famous skateboarding trick?
- 4 In what year did John Isner beat Nicolas Mahut in an 11-hour-long match at Wimbledon?
- 5 Which VFL/AFL team has supplied the most Brownlow Medallists?
- 6 The 1976 Winter Olympics were held in Innsbruck, Austria, but which American city was originally chosen to host them?
- 7 What was the last year in which Australia had an entrant in the America's Cup?
- 8 What is the name of Kolkata's team in the IPL?
- 9 Which Formula One World Champion was known as the Flying Scot?
- 10 The first Rugby League World Cup was held in what year?

Quiz supplied by Trivia Madness.
Email: wayne@triviamadness.com.au.
For answers see page 89.



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#1 SHOE IN GOLF



TENNIS

Consider: back in his heyday, would you have thought that Lleyton Hewitt's eventual destiny would be the one he currently occupies? Never the nation's most popular sportsman, to risk understatement, he's matured into a tennis statesman. Either that, or we look at what Nick and Bernard are doing now and think, well, what Lleyton did wasn't altogether too bad. This **Australian Open (Jan 18-31)** sets in motion the tennis narrative for 2016, but it should also serve as a valedictory for the scrappy South Australian, playing his native Slam for the last time, and here's hoping he gets some credit. Hopefully Hewitt will make a long-term move to the commentary box, where he's shown real aplomb; perhaps the most unexpected turn of this late-career phase. Here's to getting reacquainted with hot days and very long nights for a fortnight at Melbourne Park. **Seven**



BIG BASH LEAGUE

Been a banner season for the Big Bash, which GT insists still doesn't go on for long enough. There are indoor cricket leagues that do a more thorough job of determining a champion... Anyhow, the BBL wraps up in characteristically quick-fire fashion, with the **semis (Jan 21 & 22)** and the **Final (Jan 24)**, which will take place on the top qualifier's home ground rather than in Canberra. There is much we still don't know about this form of cricket, but from what we've gleaned so far, it usually ends with the Perth Scorchers winning and Brad Hogg (pictured) running around the field in jubilation. The Women's BBL plays its finals on the same dates, and the first year of the comp has been intriguing – watching Ash Barty segue from tennis to cricket has been among the neatest sports stories of the summer. **Ten and One**

CYCLING

The **Tour Down Under (Jan 16-24)** signals the start of cycling's top-level tour for the year, and a man everyone will be watching in the bike-riding world is Richie Porte (below). The Tasmanian finally made the move from Team Sky, and while the choice of Cadel Evans' old BMC outfit was somewhat curious (that team has its own leader, American Tejay van Garderen), we'll now get to see if Porte can realise his obvious potential as a contender for overall honours in the Grand Tours. A strong showing in and around the roads of Adelaide could be the thing to get the chatter going, and the course this year – with some short, sharp climbs introduced just before the finish of stages three and four, as well as the queen fifth stage up Willunga Hill, which Porte won last year – should help the all-round riders over the sprinters. **Nine**



GOLF

Adelaide becomes the country's seat of women's golf, as it will host the next three ladies' national championships, starting with the **ISPS Handa Women's Australian Open (Feb 19-22)** at The Grange. It will again be co-sanctioned with the LPGA, which will bring out a world-class field trying to chase NZ's world no.1, Lydia Ko (pictured above), who won the tournament at Royal Melbourne last year. On the men's side, the European Tour heads to its desert swing, with the **Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship (Jan 21-24)** bringing Jordan Spieth to the Gulf for the first time, as well as Rory McIlroy and Rickie Fowler. And the PGA Tour makes its Torrey Pines stop for the **Farmers Insurance Open (Jan 29-Feb 1)**, where Jason Day will be defending one of the titles he won last year. **Women's Open on ABC, rest on Fox Sports**

EXTREME SPORTS

In the summer heat, it's a bit of relief to tune into **X Games Aspen (Jan 29-Feb 1)** and know that it's cold somewhere in the world. Or maybe you get the satisfaction that GT does out of the fiendishly capricious nature of winter sports, such as ski cross, which we learned about at the Sochi Olympics last year. The ski cross event had been dropped from the X Games' program, but the demolition derby on snow is back in. Another notable set of X events, which we dare the Olympics to incorporate into its program, is the snowmobile category. The freestyle event also makes its return after being pulled last year, having witnessed the death of one of its top exponents, Caleb Moore, in the 2013 X Games. His brother Colten will be in Colorado, still doing all kinds of crazy flips and tricks on a snowmobile in mid-flight. **ESPN**





AMERICAN FOOTBALL

This NFL season has received unprecedented amounts of attention in this country – thank you, Jarryd Hayne – and those of us who have persisted through the rest of the season can see how it ends this month. The play-offs wind down to the **NFC and AFC Championship Games (Jan 24)**, which are effectively the semi-finals for **Super Bowl 50 (Feb 7)**, which takes place at Hayne's home field, the brand-spanking new Levis Stadium in Santa Clara. Point of interest: the NFL ditched using the Roman numerals for this big game, because "Super Bowl L" supposedly looks odd (but Super Bowl LI will be back next year). Anyhow, we hope the contest is close. Coldplay will be on at the half and we'll have the second screen going for the ads, now fetching \$6m for 30 seconds. **Seven and ESPN**

EPL

So much for those people who gripe about the English Premier League being predictable. That's been thoroughly blown out of the water this season, when no upset is too surprising and the curious flaws of the power clubs have kept the race tight. **Liverpool vs Man United (Jan 18)** was given added spice by Alex Ferguson, who flat-out identified dynamic Reds boss Jurgen Klopp as a threat: "I'm worried about him because the one thing United don't want is Liverpool to get above us." In other managerial chatter, GT will deeply miss Jose Mourinho, particularly at **Arsenal vs Chelsea (Jan 25)** time, because who didn't want one last Jose-Arsene Wenger snarl-off? As for **Man City vs Leicester City (Feb 7)**, will the Foxes (below) – responsible for so many of the season's surprises – have something for us? **Fox Sports**



FOOTBALL

European football's big-money game gets serious with the beginning of the UEFA Champions League's round of 16 (unless, of course, you are a Manchester United fan). Chelsea's domestic troubles are compounded with their first opponent in the elimination phase, as **Paris St-Germain vs Chelsea (Feb 16)** leads off a set of high-powered match-ups that include **Roma vs Real Madrid (Feb 17)**. Related subject: this year's Champs League group phase was notable for former Chelsea and Spurs boss Andre Villas-Boas (pictured), who appears to have managed his way to a career revival in Russia with Zenit. AVB informed his club that he was going to quit at season's end so he can return to his family in Portugal – fortuitous, then, that's where he'll be headed for the **Benfica vs Zenit (Feb 16)** first leg. **SBS and BeIN Sport**

BASKETBALL

The **NBA All-Star Game (Feb 15)** ventures outside the United States for the first time – okay, it's only going to Toronto, but it's a nice broadening moment for the league's midseason showcase. If you like hip hop star Drake, you're in luck, because he's going to be all over this weekend like ... Three other things to watch out for: Kobe Bryant receiving a last All-Star invite, crazy New York fans voting their Latvian rookie Kristaps Porzingis into the game, and what rising superstar and Toronto native Andrew Wiggins might have in store. He's no guarantee to make the All-Star line-up, but Wiggins should front for the **Slam Dunk Contest (Feb 14)**, where he'll be up against Minnesota team-mate Zach LaVine (below), who lived up to his billing last year as the best dunker to fly across our screens in many a moon. **ESPN**



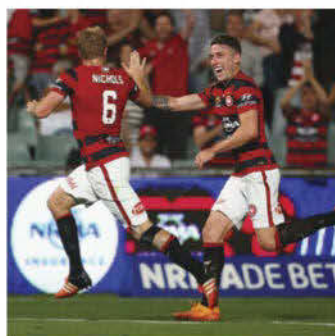
CRICKET

The limited-overs portion of the summer picks up the pace with the one-day series against the Indians. The visitors come as a confident bunch after recent efforts against South Africa. As Virat Kohli (pictured) noted, the Indians credit their Aussie tour last summer for their upturn in form. The second **Australia vs India ODI (Jan 15)** is at the Gabba, then matches at the MCG (**Jan 17**), in Canberra (**Jan 20**), before the series' finale at the SCG (**Jan 23**). There's a three-match T20 series following that, which will be played as double-headers with the Aussie women's team, the Southern Stars, who will be preparing for the defence of their World T20 title (which, we should note, their male counterparts do not have) in March. The first **Australia vs India T20 (Jan 26)** brings Australia Day cricket back to Adelaide, with the other dates in Melbourne (**Jan 29**) and Sydney (**Jan 31**). **Nine**



A-LEAGUE

If the FFA hasn't figured out how to *completely* alienate the entire fan base by this point, we should have an upcoming Harbour City derby, RBB vs The Cove, **Western Sydney Wanderers vs Sydney FC (Jan 16)** in Parra. In a season of unhappy news for the league, one undeniable positive has been the resurgence of the Wanderers (below), who look like a contender again after their over-committed, over-scheduled slide down the table in '14-15. The Australia Day fixture brings the rematch of the grand final, **Melbourne Victory vs Sydney FC (Jan 26)**, where Sydney boss Graham Arnold will hope for a different result than in the decider, although at least this match will find its way into Etihad Stadium. And there will be some mid-table tussling on a Friday night in **Brisbane Roar vs Newcastle Jets (Feb 12)** at Suncorp Stadium.



BASKETBALL

The NBL's home-and-away portion hits the closing stretch, with a **Perth Wildcats vs Melbourne United (Jan 29)** contest looming as a pre-finals tone-setter. Side note: Aussie hoops nostalgists will love the news that the Melbourne Tigers return to competition next year, in the second-tier SEABL, with a Gaze (Andrew, that is) as coach. The 36ers are clutching to postseason hopes, and they have a six-games-in-16-days stretch up their sleeve to finish the season, with a key **Adelaide 36ers vs Illawarra Hawks (Jan 30)** game amid that run. The last week of the regular season, round 19, features a **NZ Breakers vs Melbourne United (Feb 12)** game across the ditch and a return date a couple of days later (**Feb 14**) at Hisense. Chris Goulding (pictured) and company could find themselves playing the defending champs in a play-off series immediately after.

RUGBY

Rugby sevens' global circuit makes its local stops with the **HSBC Wellington Sevens (Jan 30-31)** and **Sydney Sevens (Feb 6-7)**. These are rounds four and five of ten, and while this competition in itself shows great potential, it can't help but be viewed as prelude this year – come Rio in August, reduced rah-rah will be played with Olympic medals on the line. It certainly has drawn the interest of some first-rate rugby figures, such as Wallaby and ACT Brumbies winger Henry Speight (pictured), who you would think could wreak havoc in this format, as could Sonny Bill Williams, who will be in the frame for the New Zealand septet. As for other familiar names playing in this event, there's one playing for Japan – Lote Tuqiri, but not the one who played for the Wallabies and in the NRL (however, they do happen to be cousins).



NRL

It's been a long rugby league offseason, which should make this **Auckland Nines (Feb 6-7)** even more fun. Now in its third year, the preseason carnival has surprisingly become one of the NRL's best innovations in recent times, a tasty *amuse bouche* (now there's a rugby league term) for the upcoming season. It's the place where you might first hear the name of a kid like Jack Bird, while Billy Slater and Shaun Johnson (above) will use this year's event to gauge their returns from injury. However, as we all know, the best result from the Nines is less how many games your team won and more if your team returns with a blank injury report. One thing we'd like to see this year: more imaginative alternate jumpers, although blessedly, the sleeveless look a few teams were using has been ditched. Go crazy, fellas, really.

CRICKET

Hope there's no hard feelings about the Nathan Lyon DRS debacle, because there's more cricket yet to be played between the Aussies and Kiwis this summer. Our boys hop the Tasman to try and get the dormant Chappell-Hadlee series going again, with an **Australia vs NZ ODI (Feb 3)** at Eden Park, at the Cake Tin in Wellington (**Feb 6**) and at Seddon Park (**Feb 8**). The baggy greens and Black Caps then pick up where they left off in Adelaide in the first **Australia vs NZ Test (from Feb 12)** at Basin Reserve, and the second **Test (from Feb 20)** in Christchurch. Also this month: England's tour of South Africa continues, with the third **South Africa vs England Test (from Jan 14)** in Johannesburg and the fourth **Test (from Jan 22)** in Centurion, as well as a five-match ODI series following.





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On The Punt

It's Super Rugby, but not as you know it. The provincial rugby comp has gone in for another shake-up, and now extends beyond its hemispheric bounds with the addition of a Japanese-based side. Along with its expansion classmate in Argentina and the re-entry of the Kings franchise, the new 18-team Super structure sees the clubs divided into two groups – Australia/NZ and South Africa/rest of world – and contesting a 15-game slate. Other highlights are imbalanced home-and-away schedules (plus two byes and a June international break), a lot of weak teams and some serious air miles (Port Elizabeth-Buenos Aires-Hamilton-Canberra, anybody?)

CRUSADERS	\$6	ARGENTINA	\$17
CHIEFS	\$6	REDS	\$26
WARATAHS	\$7	BLUES	\$26
HURRICANES	\$7	LIONS	\$34
HIGHLANDERS	\$9	CHEETAHS	\$67
SHARKS	\$10	REBELS	\$81
STORMERS	\$12	WESTERN FORCE	\$151
BRUMBIES	\$12	KINGS	\$151
BULLS	\$13	SUNWOLVES	\$301

(Prices courtesy of SportsBet. Pre-market odds at time of publication. Prices subject to change.)

SAFE BET

It's the All Blacks' world, and New Zealand's other teams win in it. Outside of the Auckland franchise, any of the Kiwi sides can claim the trophy, never validated as convincingly as last year when its *supposed fourth-best* team pulled off a charmed run through the finals. Despite the Highlanders claiming their first Super Rugby title, they look up in 2016 and see three of their compatriots ahead of them. The Hurricanes were clearly 2015's best team up until the final, although will miss the departed midfield firm of Ma'a Nonu and Conrad Smith, while the Chiefs will have to deal with the Sevens-related absences of Sonny Bill Williams and Liam Messam. Which leaves the Crusaders – it's now been seven title-less years for Super Rugby's winningest outfit, and the likes of McCaw and Carter are gone for good. Coach Todd Blackadder will follow at season's end, as will star winger Neman Nadolo (right), but Kieran Read remains at the head of a Black-laden core. Something to note: the Crusaders' schedule, with eight home games and a neutral-site trip to Fiji, is very favourable.



VALUE BET

All of rugby has come to learn that you underrate Argentina at your own risk. The South Americans arrive in Super Rugby with no question about their place at the table – two top-four finishes at the World Cup in the last decade will do that for you. And when you consider that 11 of the run-on XV for the Pumas in the Cup semi-final will play for this side, it won't lack for talent, particularly now that Argentina's union has decreed that all potential national reps will have to play Super Rugby. Front rows across the hemisphere are already shuddering at the thought of having to regularly face a scrum led by Agustín Creevy and Ramiro Herrera, while Nicolás Sánchez (above) and Juan Martín Hernández could reprise their 10-12 playmaking combo.



BRUSH

We knew a post-Webb Ellis exodus was coming, but it doesn't make it easier for the Australian franchises. Adam Ashley-Cooper, Will Genia, Quade Cooper, Sekope Kepu and Nic White are among the familiar names that will have casual fans asking "what happened to that bloke?" (Short answer: gone to France). It is a drain of veteran talent that will stretch the depth of the Waratahs, Brumbies, Reds and the rest. The new competition structure guarantees the top Aussie side a finals berth, but the grouping with the NZ sides will make the home-and-away path that much tougher. The Waratahs, in their first full season under Daryl Gibson, remain the best of our contenders, although you do have to wonder at the thought experiments toying with an Israel Folau (above) switch to outside centre.



BOLTER

The Japanese charmed the rugby world and beyond with their landmark victory over the Springboks, and will become everyone's favourite Super underdog. The naming of their squad and coach was left very late, enough to worry the NZ union's chief executive. Some of the scorelines should be brutal, and the travel itinerary alone should see to that. At least they didn't disappoint with the team name – this is the country that has given rugby the Brave Lupus, the Dynaboars and the Wild Knights, after all. Here's hoping there are some early signs of progress for this team, although it has been noted that there could be a decent side in Tokyo if it can muster all the stars it brings into Top League. In other words: how long until Nick Cummins is wearing Sunwolves' colours?



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How good is

JACK ROBINSON

A NEW AUSTRALIAN STAR HAS GIVEN THE SURFING WORLD A WAKE-UP CALL THIS SUMMER.

JACK WHO?

The Hawaiian leg of the World Surf League tour has a habit of announcing future stars of the sport – as it did again this year, when 17-year-old Jack Robinson from Western Australia beat a stellar field in sensational style to win the Trials event at the infamous Banzai Pipeline, earning himself a starting spot in the final (and deciding) leg of the pro tour, the Billabong Pipe Masters. Now everybody knows his name ...

WHAT'S HIS STORY?

Those in the know have seen this guy coming for years. His father had pushed him into waves since he could stand on two legs; by the age of ten he was already considered amongst the most dynamic grommets in the world, seen in films charging the powerful swells that engulf the coast of South-West WA in the Margaret River area; since he was 12 he has travelled to Hawaii on an annual basis with his dad to familiarise himself with the breaks there, and earned notices for his fearless approach to waves many times his height, and for his attractive, adventurous, new-school style.

But it was this past summer (Hawaii's winter) where all the promise was realised, and all those hours spent riding heavy West Australian reef breaks paid off. The week before the Pipe contest he acquitted himself remarkably in massive Sunset



WHAT DO THEY SAY?

“There isn't a better surfer on the planet for his age.”

– Pro surfer and fellow West Australian Taj Burrow.

Beach surf during the Vans World Cup, and earned himself the title of Triple Crown Rookie of the Year. Sunset Beach is an awkward and scary wave anytime it is overhead, but it doesn't compare to the dangers present at Pipeline, where six-metre swells break in extremely shallow water over rugged reef; several pros narrowly escaped final curtains as a maxing swell pounded Oahu's North Shore during the contest period. But Robinson showed remarkable composure, and inspiring courage, to wait for his chances and repeatedly pull into spitting caverns of water, to emerge each time the winner of four heats in succession to win the whole shebang.

Up against the seasoned pros in the Masters, he couldn't find the right waves to progress, but he left the surfing world agog. This wasn't a display of pure potential: the kid had arrived.

WHO'S HE LIKE?

The Billabong Pipe Masters is still a contest run in memory of charismatic American surfer and thrice world champ Andy Irons, who died in 2010. Irons was renowned for his ultra-powerful repertoire of moves that were performed with an apparent casualness in his body language that gave the impression of total mastery of even the most critical situation. The comparisons of Robinson with “Andy” have revved up recently: both natural footers (surfing left-foot forward), both similar frames (though Robinson still has plenty of growing up and filling out to do), and both with their mops of surf-bleached hair and tanned good looks – though young Jack proudly sports a “bowl” cut of his fringe (performed by Dad) that recalls the cult surfing heroes of the '70s like George Greenough and Peter Crawford.

The way he's going, Jack Robinson just might form a cult of his own ...

– Graem Sims



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A few drinks with

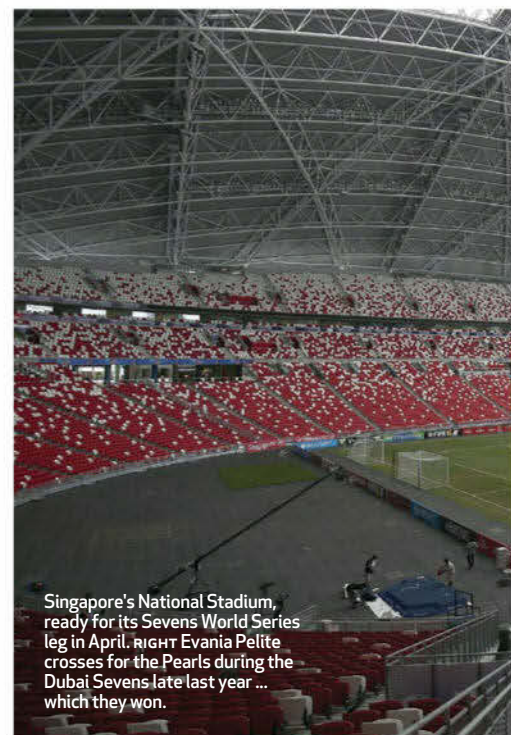
MICHAEL O'CONNOR

AS FAR as "biggest year in the history of the sport" prophecies go, none will prove as true as the year Sevens Rugby is about to enjoy. For starters, the sport's grand-prix-style World Series enters new territory with a leg to be held at Allianz Stadium in Sydney on February 6-7. A few months later, more new ground will be broken with a series stage scheduled for Singapore's brand-new National Stadium between April 16-17. Then the big one – Sevens' debut at an Olympic Games at Rio ...

Far from a recently born abbreviation of another more traditional game, Sevens is a sport with a deep history of its own. It was actually born in Scotland in 1883 when a local rugby bloke by the name of Ned Haig suggested that a one-day tourney with reduced player numbers would be a good crowd-puller to a village festival in Melrose. Fast-forward to today, the Hong Kong Sevens have been run

and won for 40 years now, while the popular Sevens World Series is in its 17th season.

One of Sevens' biggest supporters and most respected identities in recent times has been dual union/league international Michael O'Connor. Queensland-based "Snoz" was men's Aussie Sevens head coach between 2008-14, ending his tenure when the squad's full-time camp was established at Narrabeen on Sydney's northern beaches. He is far from removed from the set-up though, these days playing a key role in development, talent ID and team analysis on the odd away trip. *Inside Sport* was thrilled to grab the man and discuss with him the very healthy state of Sevens, as well as the progress of Australia's men's and women's teams in the lead-up to Rio.



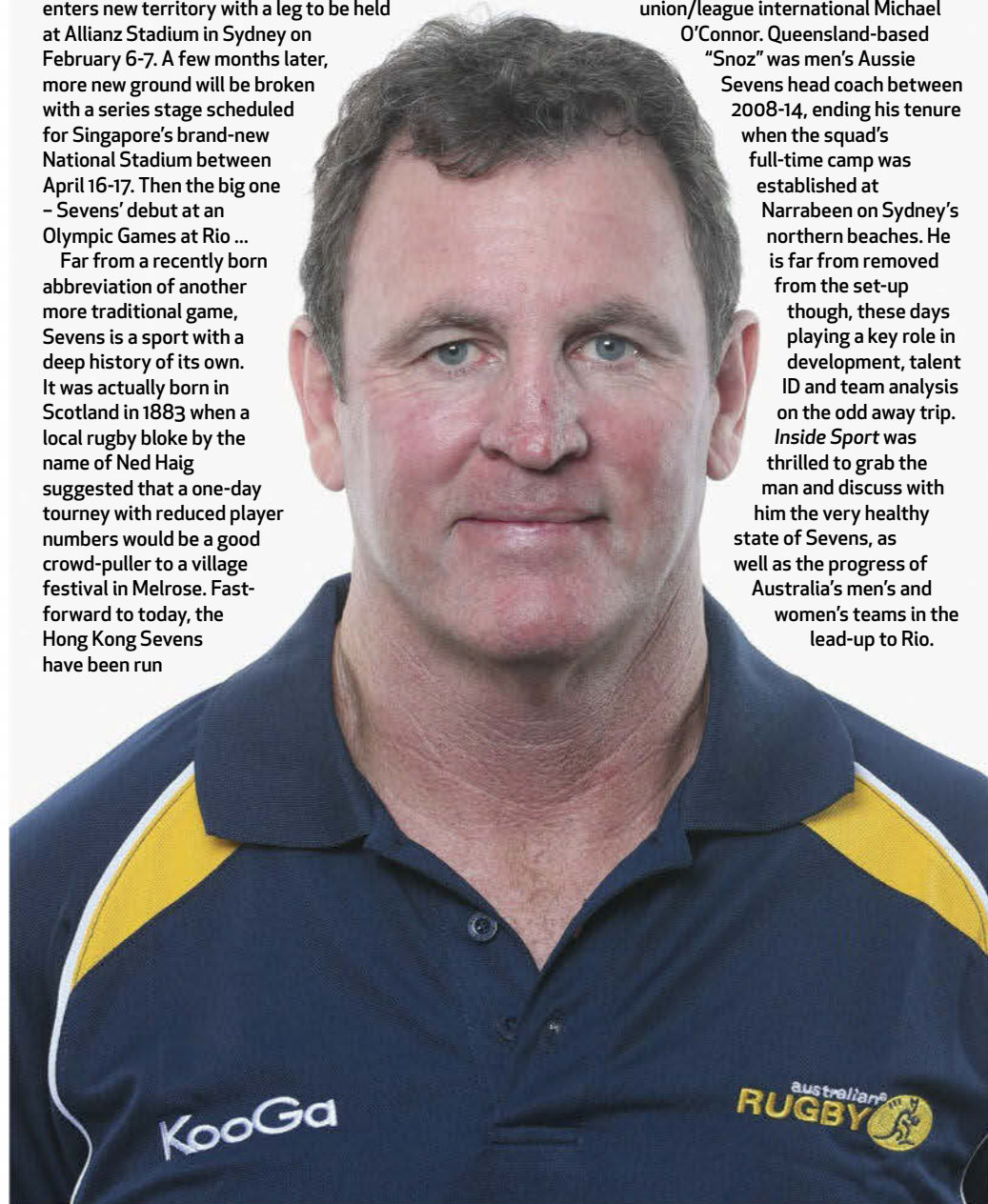
Singapore's National Stadium, ready for its Sevens World Series leg in April. **RIGHT** Evania Pelite crosses for the Pearls during the Dubai Sevens late last year ... which they won.

We heard that you accompanied the Aussie men's squad to the Oceania Sevens in Auckland as they sought – successfully in the end – to qualify for Rio 2016. What were your overall thoughts on the boys' performance that weekend?

Yeah, Tim Walsh, the acting coach, asked me to go over and help a little bit with the analysis; keep an eye on the other sides and have a general look at what the Aussies were doing as well. I thought we were very good. Very clinical. We only had one try scored against us. The boys played extremely well. We came away without any injuries, too. Everybody had good game time; the player rotation was very good. We now have a men's squad which is very flexible, with greater depth than we've ever had, certainly since I've been involved. We are in a position where we don't have to play a player because he's good at doing one thing. We have some players who are multi-skilled; they can catch, restart, are good in a line-out, good across the paddock. We are in really good shape, actually.

What have you been up to since your Aussie Sevens head coaching days came to an end in 2014?

I have kept an interest in the game, doing a bit of development coaching up here in Queensland. The Aussie Sevens program is centralised down in Sydney



PHOTOS BY Getty Images

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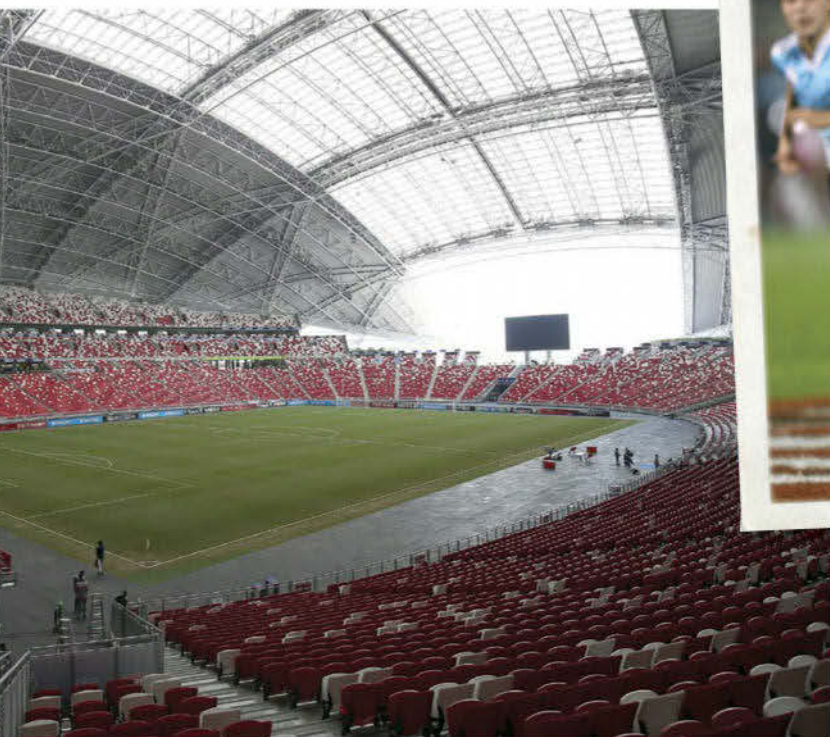
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Jesse Parahi takes a high ball during the Oceania Sevens, which our blokes won to qualify for Rio.

now, but a lot of its players come from Queensland. I have been keeping an eye out, going to local sevens tournaments, having a look at where the talent is, watching out for highly skilled younger players. For example, there's a group of younger players who went over to Samoa for the Youth Commonwealth Games in 2015. I have had those players come into development training sessions which I've run. I also went to New Zealand towards the end of the year where they played a series of games against New Zealand at Rotorua. So I've kept in close contact with what is going on and I'm just absolutely delighted the guys were able to qualify for the Rio Olympics with that Oceania tournament win – and so convincingly, too.

Apart from the incredible exposure an Olympic Games appearance will provide for Sevens, what are some of the other benefits the sport is about to reap from Rio 2016?

Just on that exposure aspect though; I have seen this happen with the Commonwealth Games ... Sevens has become one of the most popular sports at the Comm Games ticket sales-wise. I think it will be a real hit at Rio as well. You are going

to get a lot of people coming to watch the matches; it's full of high-energy, short, sharp action which is great to watch. The stakes are high. It will be great for the viewers at home and also the crowds.

Are you able to outline the general game plan to winning a game of sevens? What exactly are you focussing on?

It can depend very much on who you are playing. There is a lot of analysis. When I became involved in coaching seven, eight years ago, you did your own analysis. Now, every team has a full-time analyst who travels with the team. You have to look at all the trends in the game. Some teams play a different style to others, so as a coach you have to build your game plan around what you consider are the opposition's weaknesses. You make those judgements from your own experience, and then you have to play to your own strengths. Not all teams play the same. For example, we don't play the same way Fiji does. They are a very successful team who have absolutely wonderful athletes who play very high-risk-high-reward; theirs is an offload-dominated game where they don't like to go into rucks. Our game, in comparison, is more confrontational, physical; we're strong in contact and we ▶

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A few drinks with

don't mind setting up multiple phases to score tries if we have to. We are more of a methodical team, very similar to South Africa in that respect. And that's the great thing – there's no real right or wrong way to play sevens.

Our women's squad has also qualified for the Rio Games. Were there times at Narrabeen where you'd be peeking across the paddock to see what they were up to? They must be doing something right as well, hey?

They have been doing things right for a while, even before they got into Narrabeen. The fact they're all there and they're full-time, they got a jump on a lot of countries, I think. Their talent recruitment has been exceptional. The way they've gone into other sports like touch football and rugby league, basketball – they've gone after really good athletes... and they've got them, and got them very committed. They are a really good group of girls who are motivated, really striving for Olympic success. They have some world-class players, too. They really have. They have Emily Cherry, Charlotte Caslick, a number of girls who, if you picked a "world" seven, you'd have three-four candidates. If you have world-class players in your team, that's a big plus. They are all strong characters, really good girls, really hard working, and well-coached. Tim Walsh and Scott Bowen have done a really good job in understanding them. They are good communicators and they've done a really good job with those girls.

You have previously nominated Israel Folau and Michael Hooper as two players who would've prepared for the rigours of Olympic Sevens under a minimal turn-around from 15s. What is it exactly about them that sways you in their direction?

For starters, Michael Hooper is just a consummate footballer. In sevens, you have to be good at everything. You can't have weaknesses; you can't just be a good at tackling player, you have to be able to tackle, understand the ruck, the breakdown. And he does. He really gets it. I saw him play in the 20s a couple of years ago... I tried to get him into sevens but he swung straight into Super 15s. He understands the nuances; he's a



O'Connor puts his charges through their paces on the Gold Coast in 2012. BELOW He reckons Izzy would have made the fast switch to sevens for Rio...

smart guy. He has a high footy IQ. It wouldn't take very long at all for him to adapt to the game and I don't think Izzy would either, just because of his athleticism. He would be used in the air for restarts... among many other things. As a ball-carrier he's a wonderful player; he just keeps on beating players, setting up support. He's big. That's the other thing. Teams are getting bigger and bigger, and he has good size. The Kiwis these days are averaging 97-98kg a player. They're big boys; they can man-handle sides. But Hooper and Israel are both big boys as well.

You have been around tournament rugby for a long time and would be the least-surprised bloke in the world that an event like the NRL Nines has really taken off...

I think if you'd been going up to Hong Kong the last 30 years... it's been around for a while. A Sevens tournament is a full-on day of



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entertainment. Tournaments are great in that they build to a climax. And if everything is done well – you have the right stadium and you have the right atmosphere, music – there's really no downtime. Alcohol, the corporate boxes. You have one exciting game, the next game you might not be as interested in, but there are always a number of exciting match-ups on day one. You always have a few upsets, and day two culminates on the Sunday afternoon. It's great. Particularly in places like Hong Kong, Dubai, Wellington... They are great stadiums; they sell them out. There is definitely a formula to keeping the crowd interested and excited and entertained. Whether it's fancy dress or whatever. The sevens people just have good experience at doing it. It's a great once-a-year thing. A lot of people save up. Not that it's expensive. I think the Sydney Sevens are going to be an absolute success, because it's a cosmopolitan city with a really good knowledge of rugby and also you have the corporates and people who like to come along and really let their hair down, get dressed up, let off a bit of steam after a busy week.

Do you have much contact with your old rugby league mates? Do

you ever see the day where you're back working in the 13-man game?

No, I don't. I have been out of league for too long now. I still watch it and enjoy it, but those sorts of things... you have to spend your time around the game – like Des Hasler did, and Geoff Toovey – as an assistant coach, learning from other coaches. The game is changing, too; you have to keep up with the trends, you have to be relevant. There are new coaches coming through who are fresher about the game. So, no, I wouldn't. I am 55 now; I don't have any great ambitions to move back to Sydney. I am relatively happy with what I've been able to achieve as a player. There is a connection there with the sevens; I do love the sevens. Besides, to take on a 55-year-old who hasn't coached in the NRL would be a massive risk. Maybe not... In saying all that, I do think the game has become very generic in general play, a lot of sides looking at each other and playing the same way. It can be good to have new coaches come in with fresh ideas, but you don't have long to perform. It can be pretty ruthless.

You played both codes of rugby: we're you surprised at England's seemingly harsh treatment of Sam Burgess,

"AS A BALL-CARRIER IZZY'S A WONDERFUL PLAYER; HE JUST KEEPS ON BEATING PLAYERS, SETTING UP SUPPORT."

and also his decision to return to league as soon as he did?

Yeah, I think he was a scapegoat, really. They picked a very inexperienced squad. I didn't think England had the time together to build on things which are important in a World Cup, like centre combinations. If they were to keep that side together... I don't think it's necessarily bad coaching or anything like that. It might've been down to poor planning. Picking Sam Burgess in the squad after such a short time in the game was *always* going to be risky. I had this conversation with a journalist when he signed and I remember saying the biggest risk I could see would be that Sam would come on in a really tight game and hit somebody high. And that's the thing; it takes a while to adapt. Rugby union is a lot harsher on high tackles than rugby league. What you might get away with in rugby league... it's a yellow card in rugby union. That to me was the biggest risk in taking a league player into a World Cup, which is *full* of tight situations. Oh look, you know, he gave it a crack. I don't blame him. He is back with his brothers in rugby league. Tell you what, he's a good rugby league player and he'll certainly make a difference at Souths.

– James Smith

Snos reckons it wasn't all Sam Burgess' fault at the World Cup.
ABOVE 1986, Australia vs Great Britain, Leeds.

PHOTOS BY Getty Images




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Hot Shot

The World Surf League's Big Wave Tour made its first visit to the famed Jaws break off Maui for the Pe'ahi Challenge. Hawaiian Shane Dorian handled the 50-foot faces nimbly enough to advance to the final, which was won by another native of the islands, Billy Kemper.

PHOTO BY Darryl Oumi / Getty Images




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STARCRAVING

HIS WORLD CUP EXPLOITS ANNOUNCED THE ARRIVAL OF OUR NEWEST PACE DEMON. SINCE THEN HE'S ONLY GOTTEN BETTER. AND FASTER. THEY'RE REALLY TALKING HIM UP NOW ... COULD MITCHELL STARC BECOME THE BEST LEFT-ARM AUSSIE QUICK WE'VE EVER SEEN?

By **MATT CLEARY**

Fast bowlers need good nostrils. Wide, snorting nostrils, incensed and *bad*. Nostrils like the wings of a frill-necked lizard. Crazy nostrils. Crazy eyes, too, are good (and *bad*). Eyes that make a batsman think the bowler wants to hurt him. Dennis Lillee had them. Curtly Ambrose and Malcolm Marshall had them. Colin Croft was born with them. Dale Steyn's biography could be called "*Scary Eyes, Snorting Nostrils – The Dale Steyn Story*." Jeff Thomson had the eyes of a bull shark: dead on approach, straining blood in delivery stride, then black and dead again up close. Thommo scared more batters than Whispering Death.

We're looking into Mitchell Starc's eyes in a restaurant just off Dee Why Beach on Sydney's northern beaches. It's a few days after the mad fun of the pink ball Test in Adelaide (in which he only bowled nine overs) and Starc is wearing a moon boot to rest the foot injury that's ended his Test and summer.

Yet he's looking pretty

relaxed. There's a bottle of Mexican pale ale in his mitt and cool, reflective shades on his head. Black eyebrows sit low above long features. There's an aquiline nose, delicate nostrils, good long chin. It's a sort of aristocratic face, like the nephew of Camilla Parker-Bowles, the nice one from Buckinghamshire, plays a bit of polo, dates his second cousin, doesn't appear to have a job.

Starc is not dating his cousin (but rather is engaged to Alyssa Healy, wicket-keeper for Australia's Southern Stars). And he's far from a jobless aristocrat, being born and bred in Lidcombe and Baulkham Hills in Sydney's greater west, the great Aussie 'burbs famous for Canterbury Bulldogs and Parramatta Eels, mega-pubs and super-churches.

During our hour-long chat Starc's eyes are alternately studious (when considering the question), twinkling (when talking about cricket), or wary (when talking about his injuries). It's clear that he loves the game, but *doesn't* like talking about his body.

Talk to Starc's mates and they'll tell you he's the classic "white line fever" man. In the sheds he's the nice, even, shy

kid at school. Out of the dressing shed and down the race and through the white picket fence and he's a bad-ass. The eyes morph into *bad* ones. There's focus and laser-beam intent. He's still relatively hard to cop as the bully boy, the tough snorting pack animal – there's enough of the kid left in his skin. But as Tony Montana says, "*The eyes, Chico. They never lie.*" Starc wants to hit the seam or whatever's in the way.

"I'm not really that aggressive-natured, James Pattinson-style bowler," offers Starc about the person he becomes on the field. "I guess the way I've gone about my cricket, I try to let actions do the talking. I just try to take wickets."

A fast bowler's "aggression" – and the pantomime nature of blather and skite, and all that stuff about nostrils and eyes and great jutting chins – *will* "spill over" occasionally. It has before and it will again. Nature of the beast. Lillee toed Javed Miandad in the backside. Curtly Ambrose wasn't far from bopping Steve Waugh on the head, like Obelix. Craig McDermott, currently Australia's fast bowling coach, just about pioneered the act of hurling the ball back at the stumps on collecting it on follow-through.

That McDermott only ever *hit* the stumps once, against the West Indies when he was 19, hasn't stopped bowlers doing it ever ▶





IT'S CLEAR THAT STARC HAS ASSUMED THE TITLE

since. McGrath did it. Warne did it. It's never run anybody out but it's a "tough", aggressive play if you're a fire-breather and leather-flinger. It says to the batter, *You get back in there, Puppy, lest I ping this hard rock quite near you.* They're not out there to be nice.

In summer's first Test in Brisbane, Starc threw the hard red rock close enough to Kiwi No.8 Mark Craig to be fined \$7725, half his match fee. Starc said after the match and during our lunch that he didn't want to hurt the bloke, it was just a dud throw. Yet Starc's captain, Steve Smith, fresh and slightly insecure, looking to make a mark, told him to stop it. It cost four overthrows. And the run-out wasn't on. And Australia's cricketers, again, copped that "Ugly Australian" and "bully-boy" thing because Starc was being too "aggressive" to a Nice New Zealander. You'll recall it was Starc who threw the ball that caused Ben Stokes to flinch and pop out his hand lest it hit him or the stumps, we may never know.

So how does Starc play the traditional Australian brand of "aggressive" cricket, without upsetting officialdom? He reckons it's always on his mind. "But at the same time we're trying to win games for Australia. That's first and foremost for us. Obviously we're always in the limelight and we are

conscious of what people might think.

But we are just trying to win the game for our country.

"So we'll continue to play aggressive cricket. That's how we play our *best* cricket. But it's important we don't over step that line. We have in the past and I'm sure we will in the future. And we'll hear about it."

But where is this line? I ask. *Don't you only know if you've over-stepped it when someone tells you that you have?*

"A lot of the time the officials decide where the line is," admits Starc. "There's been times in the past when a bit of friendly banter's been perceived as something different. Other times things have been let go. But as the Australian team we have to know how the public views things. And how we view things ourselves as well."

Maybe the fine is fair enough. Maybe someone has to think of the children. Maybe the Nice New Zealanders should get more respect. Or maybe you could argue it was a mark of respect for Craig that Starc wanted to work over whoever was in the way, be it inoffensive all-rounder from Auckland or a cock-sure swinging dick like Kevin Pietersen.

Either way it's clear that Starc, with the retirement of Mitchell Johnson and Ryan Harris, has assumed, at the prime fast-bowling age of 25, the title of chief wild-eyed, flare-nostrilled spear-chucker and crazy man.

Starc's time is now.

RARE AIR

In a home-made backyard cricket net on his property in Wandering on Western Australia's wheat belt, former Test opener Geoff Marsh (father of Shaun and Mitchell) would ask his wife Michelle to feed cricket balls into a bowling machine. And towards the end of the hour-long session, for something to do, he'd ask Michelle to crank the machine up to 160km/h, the fabled 100 miles per hour. Crazy speed. Thommo speed. Marsh made sure never to rile Michelle before a net session ...

It's advice you'd give anyone facing bowling that quick. Those who've been timed at such supersonic speeds are a select group: Jeff Thomson, Shoaib Akhtar, Brett Lee, Shaun Tait and, of course, Mitchell Starc, who flung down the fastest ball ever recorded in Test cricket. Consider those *not* among this rare air: Dennis Lillee, Dale Steyn. Andy Roberts clocked 159.5 in 1975 and Michael "Whispering Death" Holding did not (though he bowled as quick as Thommo on occasion, according to plenty of old lags). Others who never clocked the ton include Malcolm Marshall, Bob Willis, John Snow, Mike Proctor, Stuart Broad, Waqar Younis, Wasim Akram and Allan Donald.

Starc's fireball came on a WACA pitch flatter than the Canning Highway. Ross Taylor, on his way to 290, defended it quite easily. Yet after the day's play he and Brendon McCullum acknowledged that Starc's spell was blindingly quick. It broke McCullum's bat. And *no one* likes it blinding quick.

"That whole spell felt pretty good," says Starc. "Breeze over the shoulder. Had it swinging a little bit. The spell was definitely faster than anything I'd done in the match. In that situation, friendly batter's wicket, you're just trying to create *something*. And I was in a good space and the ball came out faster and faster. Had a laugh about it after the game with Ross and Brendon. They said it was pretty quick as well."

A few years ago Starc had a session with the great Wasim Akram, who told him to relax his wrist to make the ball swing. Starc keeps it in mind for his entire body. "Rhythm is the biggest thing. There's times when you're trying too hard; it doesn't come out right. There's times when it seems easy. It mightn't even *feel* fast, but everything's working nicely; your body is upright, you load up at the crease and everything comes out perfect. That's

when it comes out quickest. Those times don't come along every day."

MILD CHILD

The Hussey brothers, Michael and David, would play "murderous" matches on the concrete slab of their beachside home in northern Perth. There were tears and shouting and fighting. David would refuse to bowl ... and lock himself in the car. There were similar scenes of competitive tension in the Chappells' backyard, the Waugh's, the Warnes'.

The Starcs'? Not so much. Mitchell's brother, Brandon, an Australian high jump medal hope for the Rio Olympics, is four years younger. The pair were competitive but in the main good mates. And they just *played*. In the cul-de-sac, in a car park of a warehouse nearby. Heap of games, heap of mates. Roofs full of tennis balls. The odd broken window. And they did all sports.

But cricket had Mitchell. He presented at Green Shield (U/16s) trials with Sydney clubs UTS-Balmain, Parramatta and Western Suburbs as an all-rounder who kept wicket. But it was only the latter who saw potential. It was there that Wests head coach Neil D'Costa, mentor ▶

OF CHIEF WILD-EYED, FLARE-NOSTRILLED SPEAR-CHUCKER AND CRAZY MAN.



Starc off the leash: sending off Ben Stokes in the Ashes [ABOVE LEFT], and throwing away half his match fee in the First Test against NZ [LEFT].



One of the main reasons the Australians got their hands on the World Cup ...

IN EIGHT WORLD CUP MATCHES HE TOOK 22 WICKETS AT 10.18. HE TOOK A WICKET EVERY 17 BALLS.

of Michael Clarke and Phillip Hughes, told Starc that he was a bowler.

"I was head coach of the club, the seniors," says D'Costa. "But I'd always go down and see what was happening in Green Shield. And I saw him throw the ball from the boundary. And he threw it hard and long and flat, and I thought he *must* be a fast bowler. Usually the guys that throw hard bowl fast. And he was tall.

"At training I said, 'Mate, you're a bowler.' And he said, 'I don't like bowling.' And he's arguing with me. And I said, 'Mate, for fuck's sake, I'm the head coach here, so bowl the ball.' Begrudgingly he bowled.

"So I invited him to the high-performance camp and I remember his Dad [Paul] said, 'Why is he here as a bowler?' And I said, 'Bear with me.' And I taught Mitchell his action over one step, two steps. And we went from there."

Starc remembers "arriving at Wests where Neil said, 'You're not a wicket-keeper, here's a ball.' At the indoor nets he gave me a bucket of balls and said, 'Go and bowl off one step.' That's what I did for two hours. The next week it was two steps, then three steps. And I got better. And I think that's why I've stayed pretty natural and not too mechanical."

Soon enough he played second grade, then first grade. In a match against St George at Hurstville Oval he took seven wickets, bowling poorly. "It was some of the worst bowling I've ever seen," says D'Costa. "Full tosses, wides. We presented him the ball and I said, 'Remember this, you'll never get seven wickets with that again!' But what it told me was that good players in first

grade were worried about his good balls. It was fear of the good one. He was playing for New South Wales not long after that." And for Australia not long after *that* ...

By October 2010, aged 20, Starc was informed he'd be on the plane to India. He'd been chosen in the one-day squad but was travelling with the Test guys. Learning from the training regimen of senior Test men was invaluable. Discovering they were normal people was, too.

"It was my first time in India and it was all new. It was a huge eye-opener culturally," says Starc. "I was in a hotel lobby early on and we're waiting for the bus to training. And I'm kneeling over my kit bag to sort something and Ricky Ponting came over and just pushed me over. [Laughs] And made a big joke of it.

"I'd been watching this bloke on television play cricket for years, and here he is,

nudging me over and laughing about it. It was funny. And it was fantastic. As a new kid coming in, whether you'd played no games or a hundred Tests, it was like a family."

Two summers later he was playing for Australia A when the word came: he'd made the Test squad. "They named a squad of 15 or so," recalls Starc. "It was an interesting time. New coach [Mickey Arthur], new setup. A few injuries. The night before the game I was told I was in the team."

Who told him? Starc can't remember if it was Arthur or selector John Inverarity. "It's a blur. I didn't sleep too well." He was able to get his mum to the game and his fiancée Alyssa Healy was already there. He was delighted for fellow debutants James Pattinson and David Warner. Delighted when his cap was presented by the great man Richie Benaud. And he was further delighted with his first Test wicket – McCullum c Warner b Starc. "Never forget it," says Starc. "It was a very special few days." More would follow.

AKRAM

From ball one Mitchell Starc owned New Zealand in the World Cup final, owned them like Donald Trump owns things made of gold. Starc owned *everybody*. From over the wicket or around, wide out or close to the stumps, his yorkers were devil-balls. He was unplayable. In eight matches he took 22 wickets at 10.18. In a modern game of thick-edged bats and massive attack, his economy rate was 3.50. He took a wicket every 17 balls. He was unarguably Player of the Tournament. And he was afforded the ultimate accolade for the left-handed ▶





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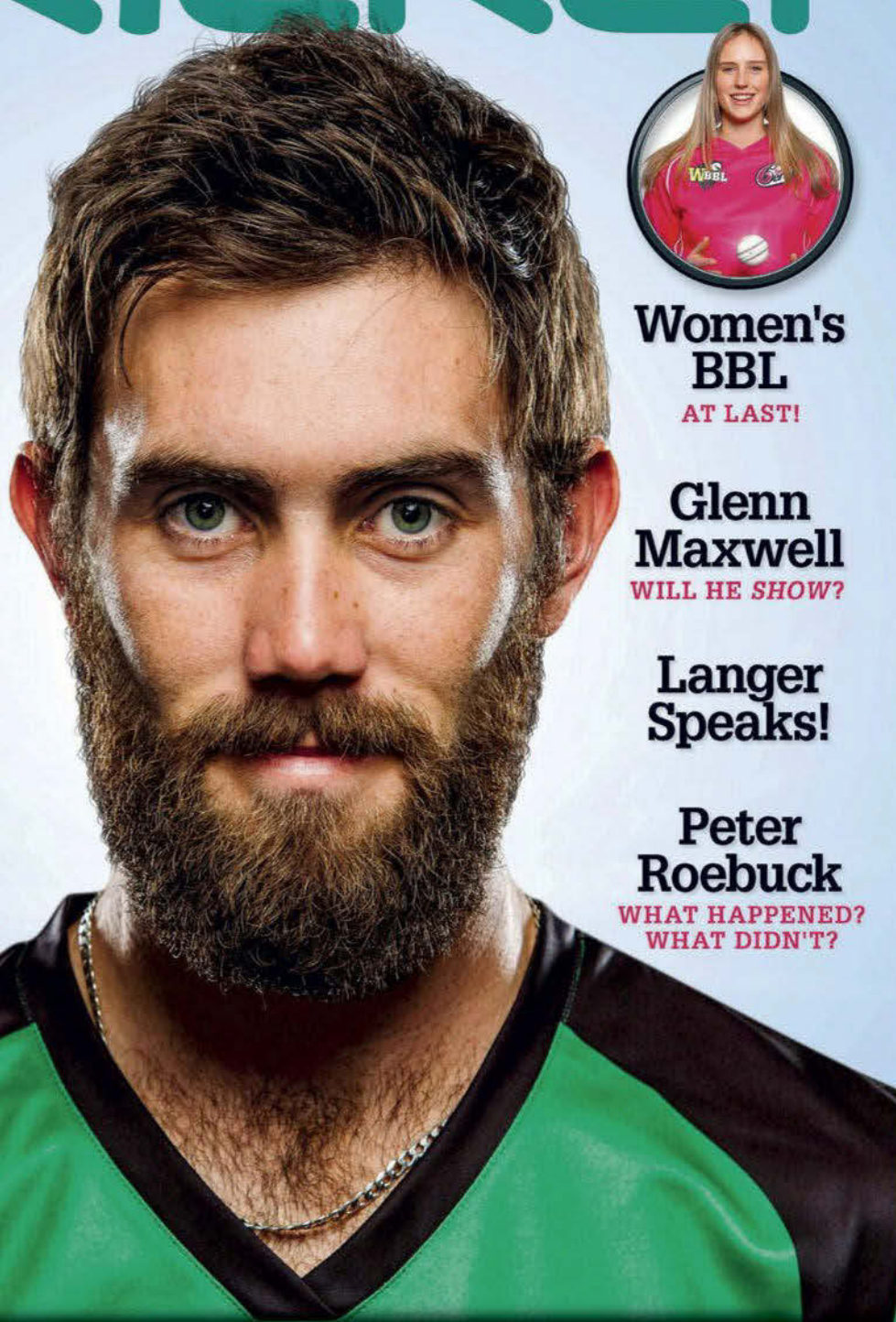


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Building a partnership: with fiancée Alyssa Healy, wicket-keeper for the Southern Stars.



WHEN STARC HAS THAT WHITE PILL ZAPPING INTO THE TOES AT HIGH SPEED, WELL, YOU CAN'T RATTLE BAILS BETTER.

leather man: comparison with Wasim Akram.

Akram is the greatest left-arm quick there's ever been. Kapil Dev reckons greatest ever, "left-arm, right-arm, all arm." Akram would hustle to the crease, little steps, then muscle the ball, fast, with a shoulder action that was almost pneumatic. He could do you from everywhere, over or around, near in or wide out. And that late swing, both ways, conventionally, Irish ... incredible skill. As Kapil says, "He was a magician with the ball."

They reckon another Pakistani great, Sarfraz Nawaz, first dallied with "reverse" swing (though didn't share it with anybody, team-mates included). Terry Alderman reckons he had it going "Irish" a couple of times by mistake. But Wasim and his partner Waqar Younis, those guys made the thing *sing*.

Now, we're not saying Mitchell Starc is the New Wasim Akram, because there'll be only one Wasim Akram. He was a freak. But when Starc has that white pill hooping about at speed, and zapping into the toes at high speed, well, you can't rattle bails better.

Australia's best left-hander? In the pantheon of left-arm leather men there's Alan Davidson, who took 186 wickets at 20.53. There's Bill Johnston, who played third fiddle to Ray Lindwall and Keith Miller, but not by much. Then of course there's the frightening, enigmatic Johnson. "Caviar" ran so hot in 2013/14 against the Poms he was DK redux. He was DK with Thommo's fear factor. He was unbelievable. Other summers he was on the verge of giving it up. Tremendous bloke. And he also had plenty of white line fever. But he'd agree he could run a little cold, and skittish.

And there was gangling, death-from-above Bruce Reid. Never the fastest, but Reid's height and proximity to the wicket at delivery gave him bounce and odd angles. Problem was there was nothing of Bruce Reid – his limbs were held together by gossamer-sinew.

Starc's body has not been without rebellion. There's ankle spurs. The stress fracture in his foot. Bummer of an injury for a quick, your foot-bone injury. He went under the knife in the second week of December. Smart money is on four months out of all cricket and loading up for the Sri Lanka Test series in July and August. Then multiple Tests against South Africa in Australia, more against Pakistan. And then we'll see that red ball sing.

Starc says he doesn't think the colour of the ball matters. "It's more a tactical thing, about what's required at the time. With the white ball you've got four or ten overs. I've played consistent cricket with the white ball. But I could be inconsistent with the red ball. But the last six months I've played consistent, back-to-back cricket. The last six months have been fantastic."

Plenty agree. Indeed if you do the mathematics on Starc's contract against his contributions in the 2015 Indian Premier League, in which he played 13 matches for the exotically-named Royal Challengers Bangalore (no Delhi Daredevils, but still), you'll find he was paid \$3848 per ball. That's right: each delivery Starc sent down in IPL Version 8, all 258 of them, was worth \$3848. Each over was worth \$20,906. Every

over, boom – another 20 grand. His 20 wickets were worth \$44,950 a piece.

For five weeks of steamy T20 big whack action, Starc was paid \$899,000, the price of a fancy Brisbane four-bedder. And all for 24 balls a game, some throwing from the boundary, and the odd bit of late whacking if he's lucky (he scored 11 runs – you do the maths). Fun cricket, stupid money. *Sick money*.

For in this mixed-up world of Kolkata Knight Riders and Caribbean mercenaries and Warney and Sachin playing cricket in New York City, whatever *that* was, this is the coin the world's premier white ball fast bowler can command. Starc, following his irrepressible and just about unplayable fast bowling in the World Cup, is a hotter property than Balmoral beachfront (where he has not coincidentally purchased a place, and for quite a bit more than \$900k).

That he's injured is a bummer for the cover of this magazine. There were questions about his "relevance" if his summer's gone and the T20 World Cup is doubtful. But he still gets the cover because Mitchell

Starc, at 25 years old, is the man. He's a global superstar. The fastest and best bowler in the land.

And we just could, people, be looking at Australia's greatest ever left-arm quick. ■



NO RISK **FEARLESS PREDICTIONS** **FOR 2016**

By **DAVID HEAZLETT**

AS FAR AS EXPLOSIVE SPORTS NEWS GOES, 2015 HAD IT ALL. BUT IT WILL PALE IN COMPARISON TO WHAT THE YEAR AHEAD WILL DISH UP. SERENA WILLIAMS DISARMING A HIJACKER AT WIMBLEDON? JARRYD ROUGHHEAD TRIPPING OVER A DUMPED CAR ON THE ANZ STADIUM SURFACE? THE NRL INTRODUCING BACK-TO-BACK GAMES AND SAME-DAY DOUBLE-HEADERS FOR ITS TEAMS? JUST REMEMBER WHERE YOU READ ALL THIS FIRST ...



JANUARY

CRICKET

Former Aussie skipper Michael Clarke uses the publication of his next book to *further* hit back at his critics. Clarke reveals that when he was recruiting coaching staff for his new state of the art cricket academy, he rejected a job application from former Australian coach John Buchanan and instead hired a pet gold fish, budgerigar and guinea pig.

SOCCER

Sepp Blatter is again admitted to hospital after suffering an additional bout of stress as investigations into corruption at FIFA continue. Rumours soon surface that Blatter allegedly requested a donation from a doctor in order to have the privilege of treating him, asked nurses to employ several Blatter family members in sought-after jobs on the day shift, and demanded a medical administrator transfer hospital funds to a private Swiss bank account.

TENNIS

After successfully pursuing a mobile phone thief in New York City last year, Serena Williams again makes news by chasing down a bag-snatcher in Melbourne during the Australian Open. Williams announces her goal of tackling a fare-evader in Paris and disarming a hijacker at Wimbledon in order to achieve an unprecedented "Serena Slam" of citizen's arrests.

FEBRUARY

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Quarterback Tom Brady (pictured below) leads the New England Patriots to another Super Bowl appearance. Brady's pre-game preparations are thrown into turmoil, though, when he misses his team's charter flight to the big game after experiencing car trouble on the way to the airport ... due to two underinflated tyres.

CRICKET

In the lead-up to the home series against Australia, New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum denies his team has a "nice guy" problem. The question is raised after the Kiwis insist on doing the daily laundry for their Australian opponents, prepare their meals for the lunch break and offer to clean the toilets in the Australian team dressing room.

SOCCER

Jose Mourinho faces increasing pressure to step down, as Chelsea's losing season continues. A combative Mourinho hits back at his critics by drawing attention to his "record-breaking" performance, pointing out that no coach in history has ever accumulated as much in fines or as many stadium bans.



PHOTOS BY Getty Images

MARCH

RUGBY UNION

Authorities release a post-game announcement criticising refereeing mistakes after the Scottish team is the victim of some contentious decisions during a tense match in the Six Nations tournament. The governing body rejects criticism that they were unsupportive of match officials – despite journalists discovering a series of abusive messages posted on Twitter by several prominent members of the IRB and featuring the hashtag #LameRef.

WINTER OLYMPICS

International Olympic Committee officials give a glowing endorsement of progress after conducting an inspection of the Beijing 2022 site, with no mention of any further winters of poor snow levels at Zhangjiakou. The IOC is also delighted to announce that fact-finding delegations will soon be visiting a record number of potential bidders for the 2026 Winter Games from some non-traditional winter sporting venues including Maui, Cancun, Tahiti and the Maldives.

SOCCER

Steve Lowy begins to make his presence felt as chairman of the FFA after succeeding his father Frank. Etching a long-term vision for the organisation, Lowy Jr outlines an orderly succession plan, locking in Frank's as-yet-unborn great great grand-daughter to take over the reins of the FFA commencing 2062.



APRIL

AFL

Former Essendon coach James Hird continues to refuse to acknowledge that the club breached any duty of care to its players. Hird makes the announcement at a press conference at his home where a journalist slips on a wet floor, a cameraman trips over a stray vacuum cleaner cord and Hird himself sticks a fork in a toaster and attempts to change a light bulb in the ceiling using a chair on roller wheels rather than a ladder.

CRICKET

Encouraged by the success of their initial foray into the US market, Shane Warne and Sachin Tendulkar announce plans for a follow-up series of matches this year. The pair rejects claims the T20 matches are uncompetitive exhibitions featuring players well past their best, at a press conference announcing the signing of 87-year-old left-handed batsman Neil Harvey for the upcoming series.

GOLF

Robert Allenby fails to make it to the US Masters after appearing battered and bruised at a police station in the middle of a PGA lead-up tournament in Hawaii. Allenby claims he was abducted by aliens and taken to the planet Zorb on a flying saucer, following a night out at a local restaurant.



JUNE

RUGBY UNION

Former team-mates Eddie Jones and Michael Cheika look forward to their teams going head to head in the upcoming England vs Australia series. The ARU denies claims by ex-Wallabies coach Jones that it "divorced" him. The ARU does admit, though, that it gave Jones 50 per cent of the Wallabies' property and allowed him to see former players every second weekend and during school holidays.



TENNIS

Nick Kyrgios suffers a third-round loss at Wimbledon in controversial circumstances and is forced to deny allegations of "tanking". Kyrgios claims his opponent was "too good", despite the 32nd-ranked Australian playing several points with his eyes closed, watching a replay of the NBA finals on his mobile phone at the change of ends and commencing the third set with a stringless racquet.

BASKETBALL

Liz Cambage is dropped from the Opals' squad after missing a pre-Olympic Games training camp due to other commitments. A livid Cambage threatens legal action, claiming she was unaware this was an Olympic year and had a pre-arranged pedicure appointment and a regular dental check-up which she was unable to back out of.

MAY

FORMULA ONE

Lewis Hamilton leads the Formula One championship after recording a comprehensive victory in the Monaco Grand Prix. Hamilton's win is all the more remarkable as in-car video footage reveals he was texting on his mobile phone during the race.

GREYHOUND RACING

Widespread reform of the industry continues following last year's *Four Corners* expose. Several trainers raise concerns after the sport's governing body takes a tough stance, insisting that trainers use *themselves* for live baiting.

AFL

Star forward Jarryd Roughead returns to ANZ Stadium for the match against the Sydney Swans ... and fortunately this year finds no exposed bolts behind the goals at the southern end of the ground. During his pre-match warm up though, he discovers several broken bottles, some sharp tacks, a dumped car and five used syringes ...



JULY

CYCLING

Defending champion Chris Froome aims to keep the leader's jersey from start to finish in the Tour de France. Froome maintains he prefers to wear yellow after rival fans continue to throw cups of urine at him during every stage.

TENNIS

Bernard Tomic successfully defends his title with a straight sets victory at the ATP tour event in Columbia. Tomic repeats his successful build-up from last year and reveals he obtained special permission from the Miami Police Department to spend a night in the cells before being released on bail as a key part of his preparations.

SURFING

Mick Fanning makes a successful and shark-free return to Jeffreys Bay. Fanning, though, makes animal-related headlines *again* after being forced to fight off an angry lion, a charging rhino and a rampaging elephant while visiting a private game park after celebrating his victory.

PHOTOS BY Getty Images

AUGUST

ATHLETICS

Usain Bolt makes history by becoming a triple gold-medallist at a second successive Olympics. Bolt's run in the 200m is particularly impressive as he recovers from being knocked over mid-race by a cameraman riding a Segway to take victory in a new world record time.

TENNIS

James Blake continues to enjoy his retirement, playing the occasional seniors exhibition match. Blake's appearance at a charity event in New York prior to the US Open is thrown into chaos after a police officer tackles him to the ground whilst serving during the second set tie break in what the officer claims is simply a case of mistaken identity.

SOCCER

The Matildas' re-scheduled tour of the USA is again threatened due to the prospect of industrial action. The team claims to have taken its preparations to a new level after attending an intensive training camp focusing on setting up picket lines and practising negotiation skills.

SEPTEMBER

CRICKET

David Warner withdraws from Australia's re-scheduled tour to Bangladesh. Warner announces he has enrolled in multiple language courses after being asked to "speak Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil and Bengali" by various sub-continental opponents who he sledged over the years.

RUGBY UNION

The ARU is encouraged by an on-line betting agency to take advantage of its "take a break" function and problem gambling help line after losing another \$300,000 on a bet designed to cover generous player bonuses in the event that the Wallabies would beat the All Blacks.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Dylan Walker and Aaron Gray require emergency treatment after again being rushed to intensive care at Sydney's St Vincent's Hospital. It is later revealed that Gray had earlier performed an appendectomy on himself and that Walker had attempted to conduct a total knee reconstruction on his own leg.



OCTOBER

BASKETBALL

The NBL launches its new season by providing free T-shirts to fans for the opening games. The Illawarra Hawks, though, ditch the shirts in favour of providing fans with free, commemorative edition cans of beer to tip on the heads of opposing players.



MOTO GP

Valentino Rossi is again in trouble after allegedly kicking rival Marc Marquez during the Malaysian Grand Prix for the second year in a row. Rossi denies committing any illegality, although video footage is later released showing him wearing a black belt and a taekwondo robe under his racing outfit.

ATHLETICS

The IAAF maintains its suspension of the Russian Athletics Federation. The Russians make a strong commitment to change and do "whatever it takes" to be allowed to compete again. In a series of wholesale changes, the Russian Federation announces a tripling of its bribery budget, the employment of 100 additional pharmacists and the construction of six additional laboratories.

NOVEMBER

BOXING

Despite suffering another defeat at the hands of a much younger opponent, Anthony Mundine announces his determination to fight on for many years. Mundine seeks dispensation from boxing authorities for a travelling room to be installed from his dressing room, the volume turned up on the PA, and walking frames to be permitted in the ring in order to better cater for the needs of senior boxers.

SOCCER

The FFA remains concerned over the threat posed by protesting fans. It seeks to limit the damage by encouraging clubs to offer special membership packages covering entry fees for just the first part of the match, and ear plugs and blindfolds in club colours to prevent fans seeing or hearing anything.

HORSE RACING

The sport is forced to defend criticism that horse racing is chauvinistic after last year's winning jockey, Michelle Payne, struggles to find a mount for the Melbourne Cup. Matters are compounded after rumours circulate that the VRC is contemplating banning fillies and mares from taking part in the race that stops the nation.



DECEMBER

RUGBY LEAGUE

The NRL maintains its strong commitment to player welfare at the announcement of the draw for the 2017 season by prohibiting five-day turnarounds. Players are somewhat mystified by the revelation that in order to better cater to the requirements of TV broadcasters, the draw now includes the introduction of back to back games on Saturday and Sunday and the occasional "double header" on Friday nights, where teams play a 5:30pm

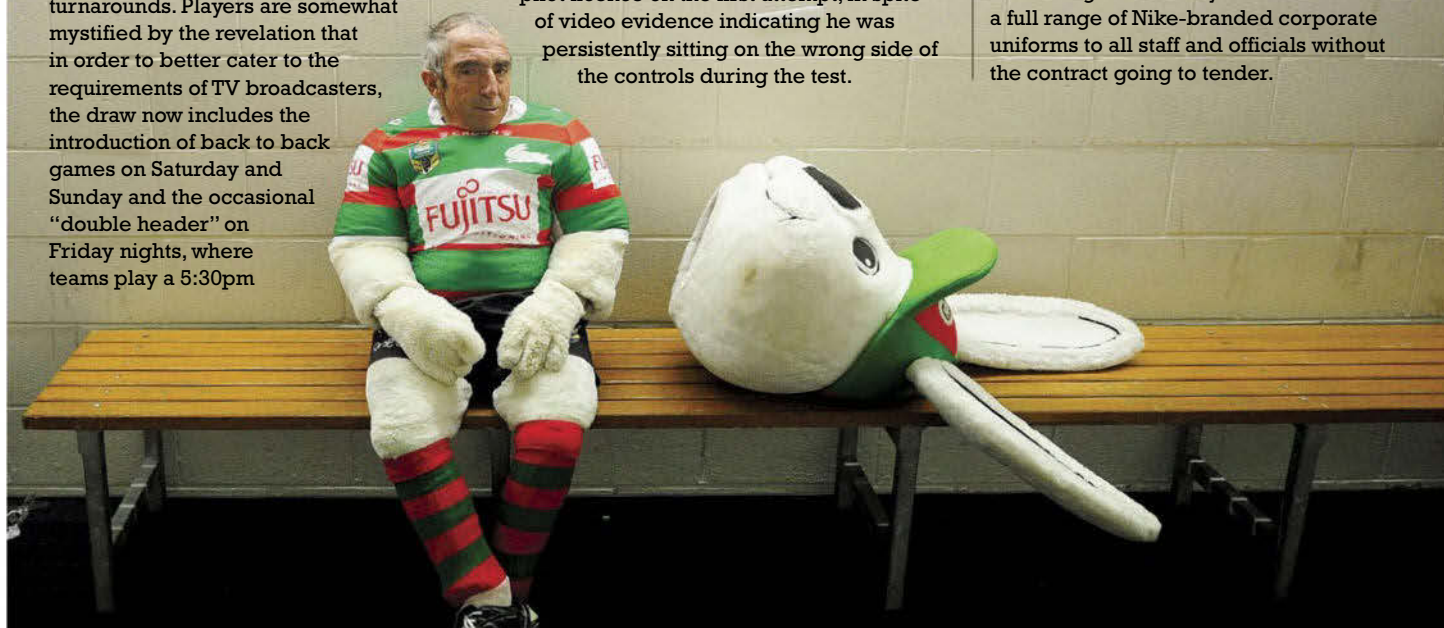
twilight match before backing up with a second game under lights at 8pm.

RUGBY UNION

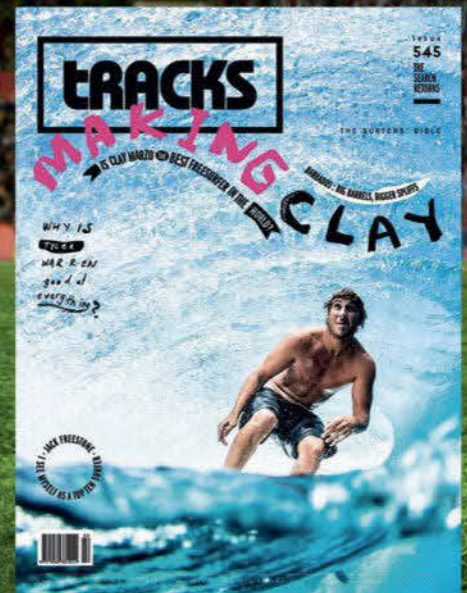
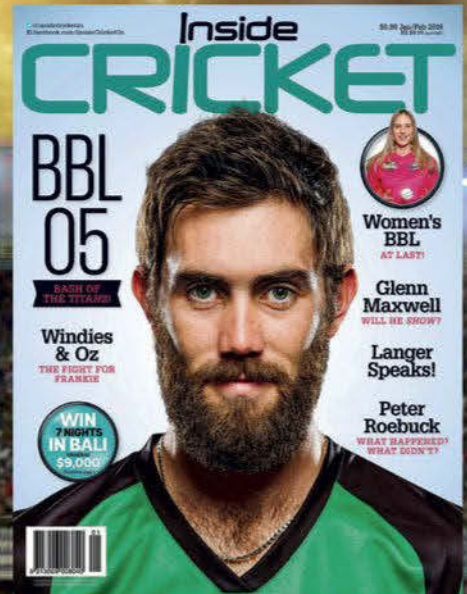
Richie McCaw settles into a new life, post-retirement from rugby. McCaw is controversially awarded his helicopter pilot licence on the first attempt, in spite of video evidence indicating he was persistently sitting on the wrong side of the controls during the test.

ATHLETICS

President of the IAAF Sebastian Coe maintains he was never reluctant to sever his long association with Nike over perceived conflict of interest. Commentators are nevertheless taken aback when the IAAF launches a new logo containing a swoosh symbol and issues a full range of Nike-branded corporate uniforms to all staff and officials without the contract going to tender.

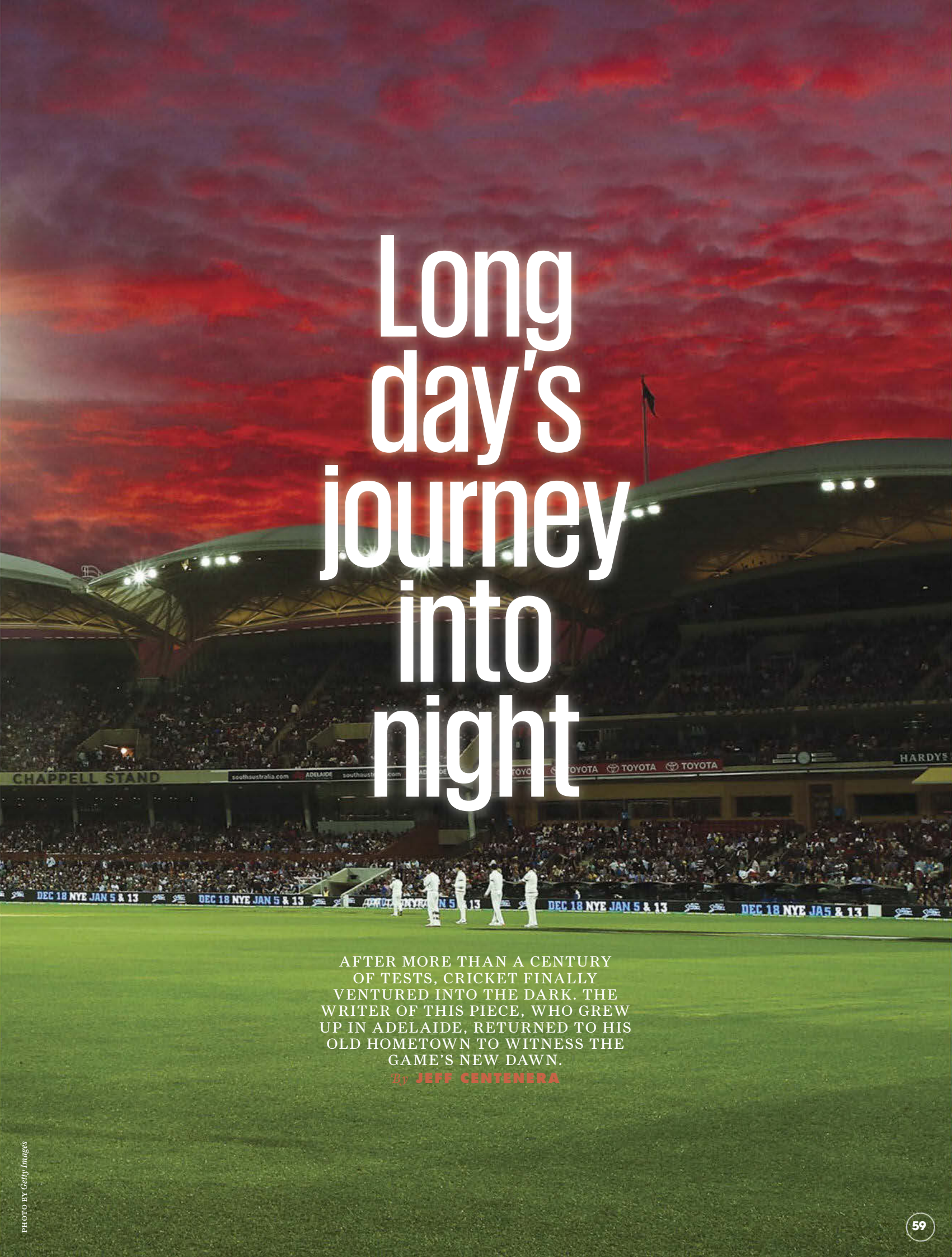


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Long day's journey into night

AFTER MORE THAN A CENTURY OF TESTS, CRICKET FINALLY VENTURED INTO THE DARK. THE WRITER OF THIS PIECE, WHO GREW UP IN ADELAIDE, RETURNED TO HIS OLD HOMETOWN TO WITNESS THE GAME'S NEW DAWN.

By **JEFF CENTENERA**

IT IS A VAGUE memory, of an event that was an *echo* of something actually memorable. It might not have been the first time I saw Adelaide Oval, but I remember it foremost. It was 1988, the year of the nation's Bicentennial, and cricket was swept up in the retrospective spirit. You can always count on this game to mark a century, which was probably what motivated the two sides of the 1977 Centenary Test to get together for a reunion tour of, somewhat ironically, limited-overs matches. The tour itself marked ten summers since that momentous contest at the MCG: McCosker's broken jaw, Hookes flaying Greig to the boundary, Marsh recalling Randall and all that.

This was all lost on a group of schoolboys who had only just been born the year of the Centenary Test. Indeed, we were probably more interested in David Hookes, who, as the captain of South Australia at the time and



Australia's new captain aims up against a new-coloured ball ...

REMEMBERING 408	
NEW ZEALAND	AUST
1ST INNINGS	BOWLERS
2ND INNINGS	1 STARC
AUSTRALIA	2 HAZLEWOOD
1ST INNINGS	3 SIDDLE
2ND INNINGS	4 LYON
WICKETS	5 MARSH M
GUPTIL	6 SMITH C
SUNDRIES	7
	8
	9

the only remaining active first-class player, was replicating his five-fours-in-an-over feats against the rest of the retirees. (The unusual kid in our group – there's always one – admitted to being such a fan of Derek Randall that he cheered for England during early-1980s Ashes contests.) But cricket-obsessed as young boys can be, our teacher obliged to take us to the Wednesday match after school.

Mr Nicholls is remembered the way a year-six teacher always should be. Barry Nicholls had some cachet around the school because he was a grade cricketer. He styles himself as the most boring batsman in the history of Kensington, Donald Bradman's old club, no less. One of his grade team-mates back then was Andrew Hilditch, another South Aussie luminary. Barry Jarman was his coach, John Inverarity *his* school principal. Still at the age when you don't really think of your teachers as people, we appreciated that Mr

Nicholls was as much a nuffy as we were, and that he was eager to cultivate our interest. My migrant parents, who hailed from one of the many non-cricketing parts of the world, might have thought this field trip a rather strange tangent for a proper Jesuit education. But they consented, and even made sure I brought along enough money (as it would happen, the gates had been opened by the time we arrived).

It is a vague memory. I caught up with Mr Nicholls recently, to see if he could recall the day. He eventually left teaching in Adelaide to become a journalist in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. He now hosts drive-time for regional ABC Radio in the west, and has written a few interesting books which drew on the milieu of late-'70s to mid-'80s cricket, a history of the non-World Series Australian players, *The Establishment Boys*, and the more personal *You Only Get One Innings* and *Cricket Dreaming*.

I figured he might have remembered. He did recall a benefit match for Les Favell, which was made memorable when Favell, dying of cancer, joined Bradman for the toss. But that wasn't the one – that happened the year before. In a remote nook of the internet, there somehow remained a scorecard from the game: Old Australia XI vs Old England XI, reduced to 42 overs per side, a win to the hosts by 27 runs. Hookes, contrary to recollections of his dominance, made only 11. Mr Nicholls noted that Randall was run out for a duck, which no doubt disappointed my odd school chum.

The details had long become hazy. What lasted were the *impressions*: the hill area,



“It is amusing that Test cricket's grand



Making history. LEFT
Keeping score, the
old-school way.

where we sat, extended halfway around the ground; the stately scoreboard, framed by fig trees and the cathedral spire; the stands bearing anachronistic names such as George Ciffen, Sir Edwin Smith and Mostyn Evan. No doubt it has been tinged by nostalgia, but it was entirely bucolic. The place lived up to Adelaide Oval's reputation as one of the most picturesque grounds in cricket.

I mention to Mr Nicholls that I was headed to the day-night Test between Australia and New Zealand, and that it would be the first time in more than 20 years I would be stepping back into Adelaide Oval. He had seen the vaunted redevelopment, and knowing him as a thoroughgoing cricket traditionalist, I was interested in his thoughts on the ground and what was going on in Test cricket in general. "The change from cricket grounds to stadiums is inevitable if you want to promote the game to a broader audience," he replied. "I don't think the ambience of Test cricket has lost anything at the new Adelaide Oval."

The game itself is another matter. From an echo of one of the most thrilling five-day matches ever played, we were contemplating this new approach to the classic form of cricket, a shot in the dark

(pardon the pun) at keeping alive a game that seems hopelessly out of step with modern life. "Test cricket is on a slippery slope," offered Mr Nicholls. "Already we see so few five-Test series and we are now [merely] filling spaces between Ashes series. Does Test cricket have the same traction in Australia as ten years ago?"

PERHAPS it's coincidental, but cricket's imprint is all over Adelaide. Upon arriving at the airport taxi rank, it reminded me of the time I was lined up directly behind a blazer-clad Phil Hughes, returning to his adopted state after national duty. Leave the airport, and the first main street you'll see is the former Burbridge Road, renamed since 2001 to Sir Donald Bradman Drive. Stay on this road through the middle of town and you'll pass close to Prince Alfred College, best known to cricket TV viewers through the anecdotes of Chappelli's youth, as well as his brothers'. Keep heading toward Adelaide's leafy eastern suburbs and you're in the neighbourhood where Bradman chose to spend most of his life.

Adelaide's association with Bradman has a different, tangible quality. Not unique – Bowral in NSW can boast of the same thing – but as The Don has risen to a level of secular sainthood within Australian culture, the reminders of his lived-in existence seem incongruous. However, Bradman, living legend as he was, was just "there". My Catholic school was only a few blocks from his home in Kensington Park, and a couple of boys in our class thought nothing of approaching him while he

was in his front yard to autograph a bat.

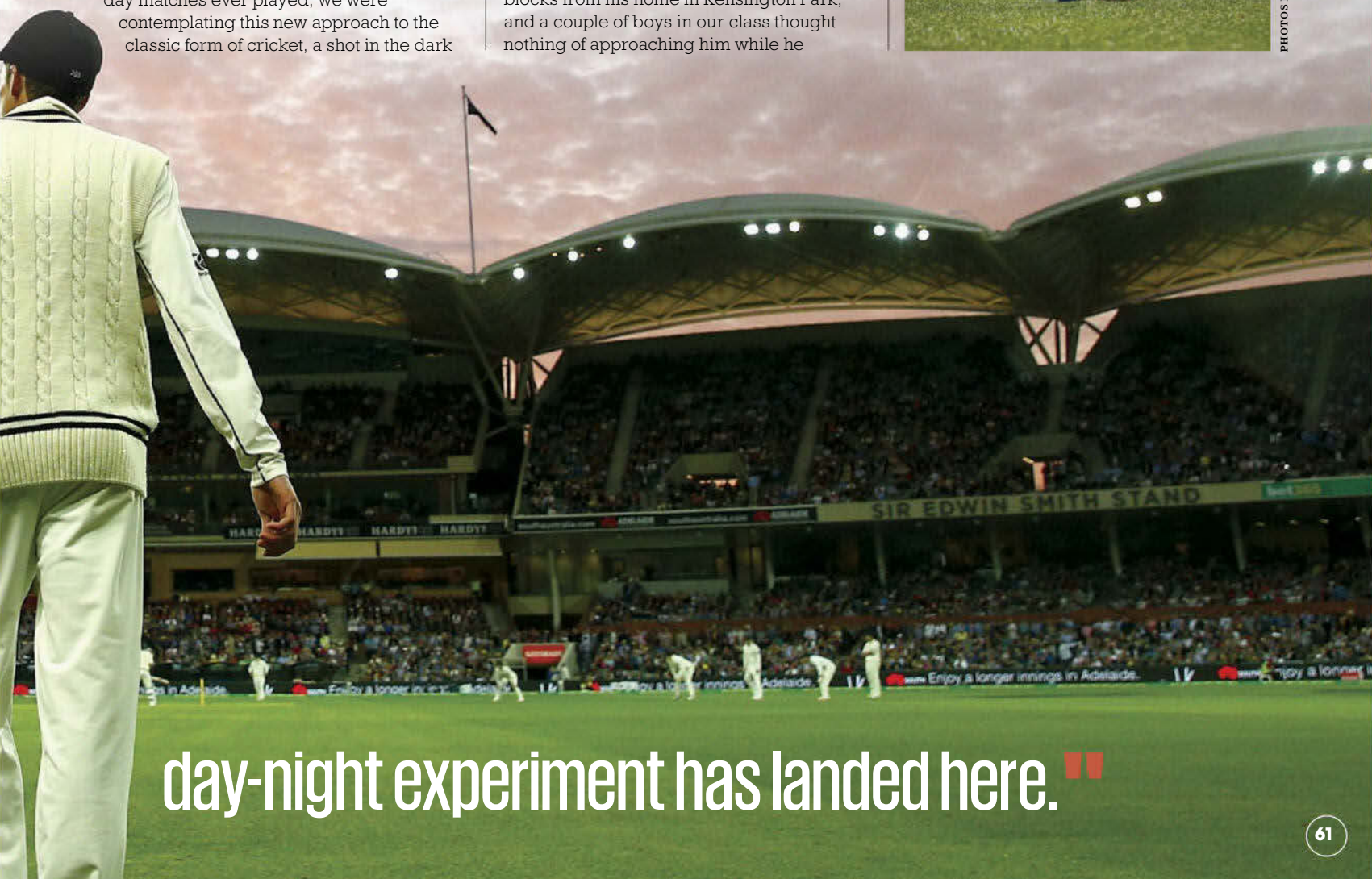
Sir Don of Adelaide remains a source of civic pride. For years, the archive he donated was the thing you got most excited about on a school trip to the State Library. Part of the collection was moved to Adelaide Oval, and occupies a prime place in the revamped ground, just off the entrance to the southern Riverbank Stand. The familiar beats of Bradman lore are recounted, including a faux corrugated water tank where you can try imitating his boyhood trick with the stick and golf ball. But the displays also betray hints of the parochial: sure, he averaged 99.94 in Tests, but he was twice club champion at Mt Osmond Golf Club!

Confluence (rather literally – this is the concourse area): Our Don at our village cricket green. Or is it conflation? A nod to the past encased in an otherwise modern monument to spectator "amenity". A place that is no longer just a cricket ground, but spends the other half of the year as a stadium brought up to code for AFL ▶



Cricket would never look
the same again ... sort of.

PHOTOS BY Getty Images



day-night experiment has landed here. ■

football. Adelaide Oval itself has become a source of civic pride, a tourist spot to visit and an economic engine for the town. It is an MCG in miniature, with a classy restaurant inside, and you can climb the grandstands a la the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

It is amusing that Test cricket's grand day-night experiment has landed here, particularly for those locals who recall the raging debates over getting lights installed at Adelaide Oval in the first place. A football match was played there back in 1885 lit by portable electric lights, but it wasn't until 1997 that the city council would approve light towers at the ground, and only then because they were retractable. One of the main objections to permanent towers was how they ruined the vista from the gardens atop Montefiore Hill, which features the landmark statue of the founding surveyor named (no joke) Colonel Light.

One of the retractable towers collapsed,

which eventually led to permanent ones being built. But local politicking would track every step of Adelaide Oval's change, including the major decision to invest half a billion dollars for the latest facelift, accomplished with some sleight-of-hand from a former Labor state treasurer. Crows and Power supporters have relished their move into town from the old footy-designated park in West Lakes, voting with their feet to constitute the third-and-fourth-best crowds in the AFL for their respective clubs. Others appreciate that the oval has become a hub. Detractors lament the loss of heritage, including those stands named after Giffen, Smith and Evan. The National Trust of SA was scathing, saying it was "no longer an iconic cricket ground, it's turning into a generic universal stadium that could be anywhere in the world".

The ground, like cricket itself, is making concessions to modernity. There *has* been an effort to retain some of the old-world charm, centred mainly on the scoreboard and the Moreton Bay figs. The Victor Richardson Gates, commemorating the Chappell patriarch and a ludicrously talented athlete (he represented or won state titles in six sports), are tucked away and go unused for access. St Peter's Cathedral is no longer visible from much of the ground; chatting with an old newspaper colleague who now works in Adelaide, he mentions that he wrote a story about how you *could* see the top of the cathedral from the southern Riverbank Stand ... if you sat in row X. He adds that the naming of the Riverbank Stand also stirred controversy – the state government wanted to emphasise the surrounding Torrens River precinct as a destination, and thus the anodyne name. Just

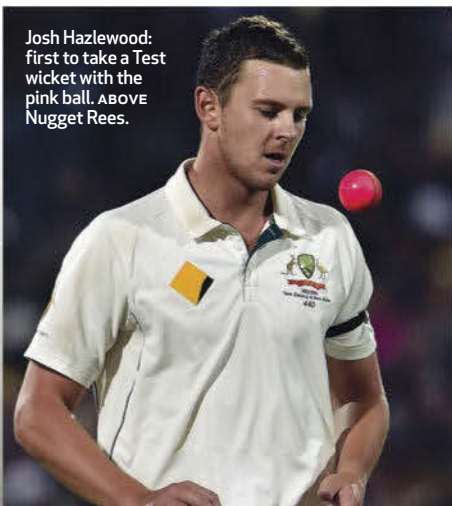


before the Test, Darren Lehmann suggested the stand be renamed in honour of Nugget Rees, the South Australian who has been a friendly presence in the Australian dressing room for as long as anyone can remember. A nice idea, yet a little harsh on George Giffen, the great all-rounder and original Ashes Test participant, who was busted down from his own stand to bronze statue.

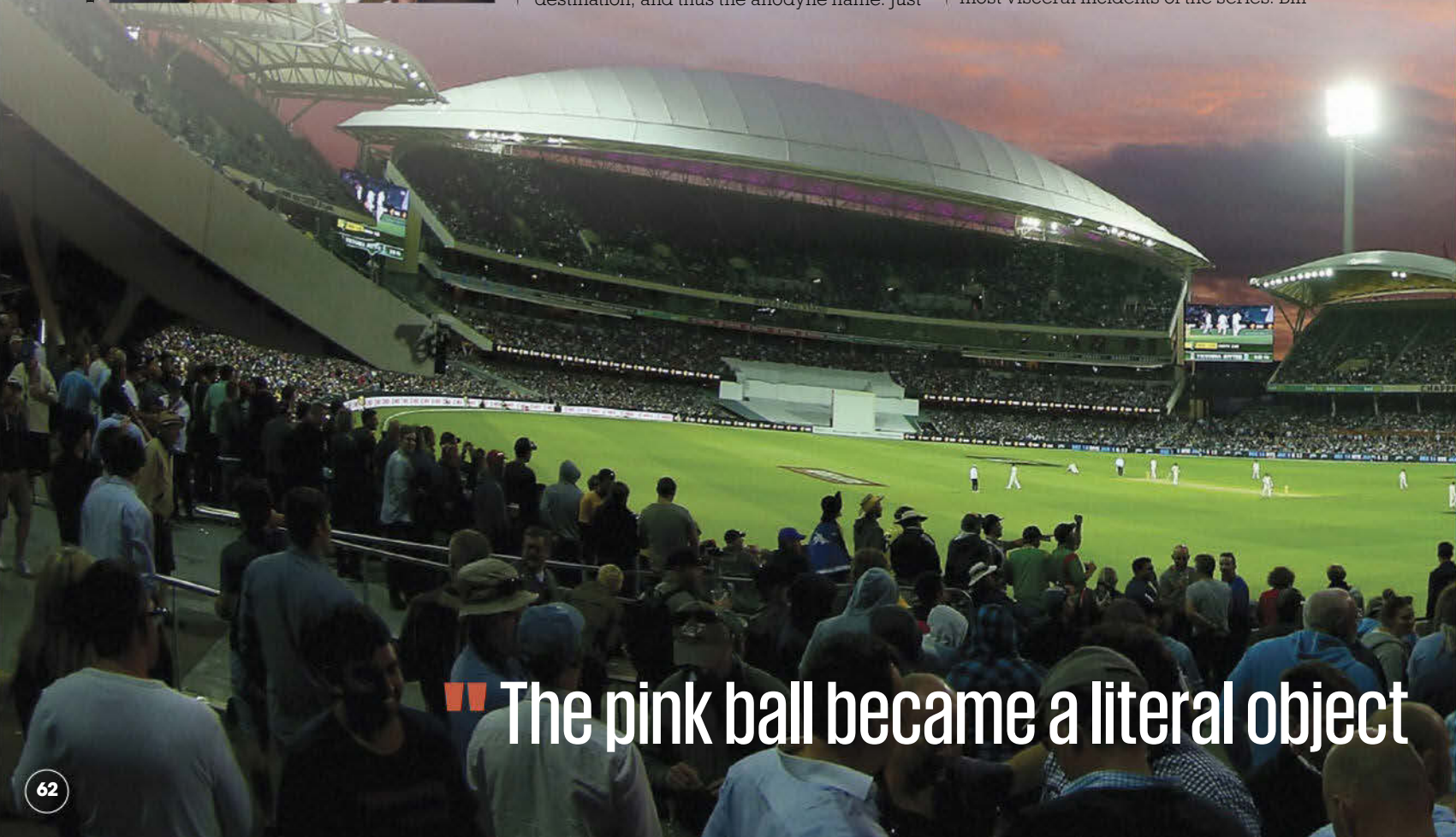
It was hard not to think of posterity, as this Test, by definition, would be historic. And Adelaide has seen some good ones: the Ashes Test in 2006, when England found a way to lose despite a first innings total of 551, as the Aussies took nine wickets *and* chased down 168 all in the last day; the closest Test ever in 1993, when Courtney Walsh caught Craig McDermott on the glove and ended an impossible tenth-wicket comeback for a one-run victory; another against the Windies, in the iconic 1960-61 series, when Lance Gibbs took the first hat-trick in Australia since before the First World War, and Ken MacKay and Lindsay Kline held out for more than an hour and a half to secure the draw.

No matter how great or important an Adelaide Test can be, it proceeds with the acknowledgment that it cannot surpass the one for all time – the third Ashes Test of 1932-33, the flashpoint of Bodyline. The most visceral incidents of the series: Bill

Josh Hazlewood: first to take a Test wicket with the pink ball. ABOVE Nugget Rees.



PHOTOS BY Getty Images



■ The pink ball became a literal object

Woodfull and Bert Oldfield struck, Douglas Jardine's provocations, mounted police holding the crowds back, Woodfull's rejoinder to the English team manager about one side playing cricket – they all happened here. The Bodyline Test becomes a point of reference during the lead-up week, as Adelaide's record Test crowd remains the 50,962 that came to watch on the second day.

The tension at the ground has passed into legend. It was best captured in an observation by Bill O'Reilly, which Ian Chappell noted during the day-night Test as the essential statement about the conservatism of Adelaide crowds. "It was lucky for Jardine we were in Adelaide," O'Reilly said. "If Bertie had been struck in Melbourne or Sydney, the mob wouldn't have been waiting around. They would have tried to *lynch* him."

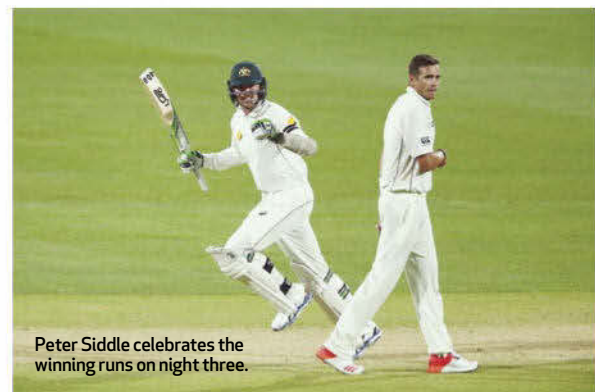
BEFORE the start of the cricket summer currently being played out, I asked Mitchell Johnson what he thought of the day-night Test concept. The easy-going quick's

reply was surprising: he had nothing nice to say, so he refrained from comment.

Johnson retired just before Adelaide, which was probably coincidence, or one hell of a principled stand. But there had been pronounced resistance among the players to this new way of Test cricket, something that a boost in prize money couldn't salve. Even for professionals who have long since become accustomed to playing with the lights on, their internal clocks for long-form cricket had suddenly been scrambled. The pink ball became a literal object of fascination: was it easily visible? Did it degrade? Would it behave differently at night?

The thought bubble floated up that day-night stats shouldn't count against a player's official numbers, or should be classed as a special case. The merits of this were highly debatable, but the fact it was *brought up* reflected a deeper unease about the unknowns the cricketers were going to face. During the Test, it was announced that statistics compiled during World Series Cricket would finally be officially recognised, almost coming off as a pre-emptive hedge against any notion that the third Australia-NZ Test of 2015 fell outside the game's established record.

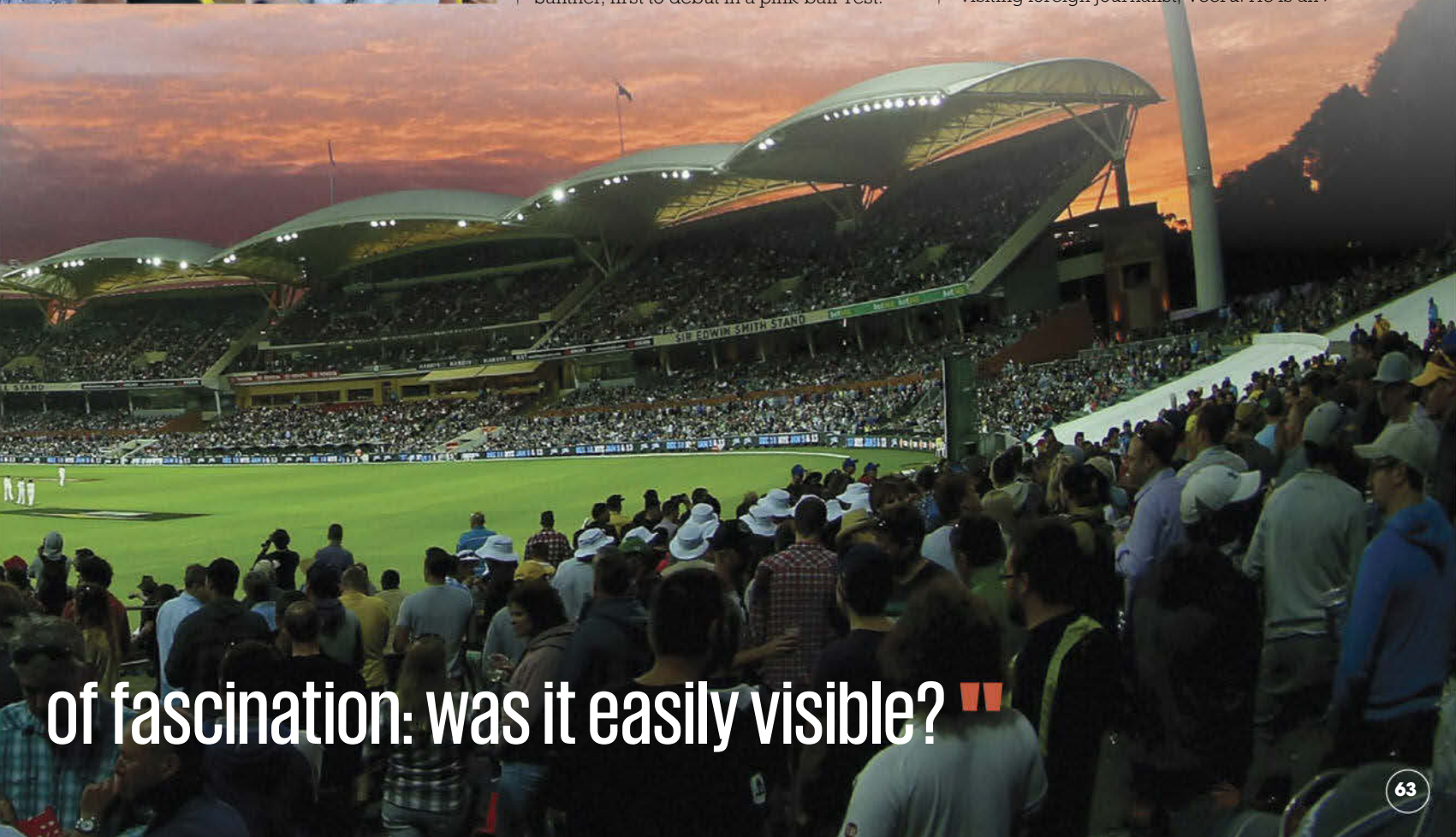
But as the pink ball flew around warm-ups on Friday, which themselves were taking place at a time when the match would usually be settling in, there was a sense that, yes, after more than 138 years, *we're actually going to do this*. On the commentary, Michael Slater gag-welcomes viewers to an "afternoon of ODI ... Test cricket!" Nearly everything that follows is a first: Black Cap lefty bat/spinner Mitchell Santner, first to debut in a pink-ball Test.



Peter Siddle celebrates the winning runs on night three.

Martin Gupthill, first batsman out to a pink ball, Josh Hazlewood first bowler to take a wicket with it. An interlude: Phil Hughes remembered, hearkening back to another significant Adelaide Test, less than a year ago. More interludes: cricket has its first break for "dinner"; *this* change seems to stir the most talk around the ground. The NZ innings concludes shortly after, but not before Tim Southee hits the first pink-ball six. Around 8pm, Test cricket experiences its first official sunset, with parts of the southern sky matching the colour of the ball. Australia loses a couple of early wickets, and Steve Smith and Adam Voges cautiously bat to the close, ruining all those jokes about nightwatchmen. Twelve wickets have fallen this day (and night) in clearly the best contest of bat and ball seen all summer, admittedly clearing a low bar set in Brisbane and Perth. The crowd number, as expected, is robust: 47,441.

During the dinner break, while the in2Cricket kiddies took to the field, I struck up a media-centre conversation with a visiting foreign journalist, Veeru. He is an ▶



of fascination: was it easily visible? "■

“ Even in this reconstructed sporting palace, there was a sense of the familiar. ”



Indian based in Singapore, but travels to all corners of global cricket producing one of the ICC's television shows. He is here for only a couple of days, but that's how significant this game is. The pink-ball Test has been sold on a spectrum ranging from history on the one end to novelty on the other, but what observers in Australia haven't fully comprehended was how this experiment was less for our way of watching cricket, and more for the rest of the world's. Veeru offers a dose of reality: Test cricket is doing fine in Australia, and England as well, but it's struggling pretty much everywhere else, even in its new-money centre of power. Looking out upon the crowd, and at the potential next generation of fans across the grass, Veeru is wistful. "We need this in India," he says.

The match moves briskly; it will be settled within three days. Beyond all the changes with the timetable and the ball, the Test will probably be best remembered for a curious DRS decision involving Nathan Lyon, which may have turned the match. More than 120,000 pass through the gates, and the captains acclaim the spectacle. The day-night Test has avoided hints of self-defeat, which was the most desired outcome of all for the administrators – they will be able to go straight ahead and schedule the next one.

It had looked, and conducted itself, like classical cricket. And that was perhaps the deepest concern that needed to be allayed. It seems, in this moment, that everything is on the table when it comes to the multi-day game in whites: not just a pink ball, but there were suggestions of changing the toss to begin the game, cutting down from five days to four, doing away with the draw as a result, the need for a larger championship for the format. If we're going to take Tests beyond the daylight hours, why not change a few other things, too? Cricket is among those sports that

jealously tends to its continuity. Or to be more precise, the *illusion* of its continuity. For something that we regard as a venerable institution, Test cricket's origins were kind of jerry-rigged. And we have an Adelaide native to thank for that – it was the writer Clarence Moody, in his 1894 book *South Australian Cricket*, who deemed which previous matches were Tests or not. In his recent book *Test Cricket*, author Jarrod Kimber noted: "It was after a very long-winded, and yet still kind of wishy-washy description, that he finally announced that the first Test was 1877. His entire list became Test match canon. It might seem odd that a sport could function like that."

Everything that followed, from the players who tattoo themselves with their Test match number to the strident arguments over the agronomic condition of a 22-yard-long strip of grass, emanated from Moody's list-making. But that's very much the point. Plenty has changed in Test cricket over the years – when Bradman and company played at Adelaide Oval in 1933, the match went for six days, with a rest day in there as well – and each innovation has been woven into the game's fabric. Indeed, the talk of standalone stats for the day-night Test touched a nerve, because to enjoy Test cricket is to see it in a context that stretches back to matches that have become a vague memory. We choose to believe in the illusion of continuity.

ON THE WAY into the ground for the final time along King William Street, I passed an advertisement painted on the footpath: "Enjoy a longer innings in Adelaide." A destination promotion, of course, but also a self-referential joke. Because of the traditional quality of the Adelaide pitch for batting, the local spectators are known to leave their seats for

the bar or the lively marquee scene out back of the members'; you weren't likely to miss a bunch of wickets falling ...

Sedate place, Adelaide. As the Adelaide-born author Susan Mitchell wrote in her book *All Things Bright And Beautiful*, which examined the bizarre duality of Adelaide's reputation for good living as well as serial murder, "adherence to certain 'decencies' is still a fixed part of the culture". The city was planned from the outset, and doesn't feel the urge to change much. Even in this reconstructed sporting palace, probably the biggest marker of change in the city, there was a sense of the familiar. It occurred to me: what we want out of Test cricket is what I want out of my old hometown.

For the last session, I head out to the hill area in the shadow of the scoreboard, or what was formally known as the Northern Mounds. It isn't much of a hill anymore, as there's seating all around. Only a week later, the town would swelter through its hottest December night since 1897, but the weather tonight is near ideal. This is still the crowd that Tiger O'Reilly saw, basically good-natured, definitely well-lubricated. A couple of blokes dressed as bananas become the source of much mirth; a circle of sombrero wearers tries to provoke a reaction from the replacement fieldsman on the boundary; a big fella skols the five beers he brought back from the bar, inspiring chants of *you are a legend!* This crowd moves from this night-life scene to the next, without a hitch.

They are probably not too concerned about the historic continuity of Test cricket. But amid the bananas and bonhomie, the strange affinity that we have for one of the most eccentric forms of spectator sport is being kept alive. Test cricket may change, but the various reasons why we watch remain the same. Maybe there wasn't too much different to this new old cricket after all ... ■

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EBC



THE INAUGURAL *INSIDE SPORT*/CAS CLUBBIES HAVE BEEN RUN – AND WON. AND THE AWARD FOR THE BEST SPORTING CLUB IN AUSTRALIA GOES TO ...

Photos by **JOSEPH FEIL**

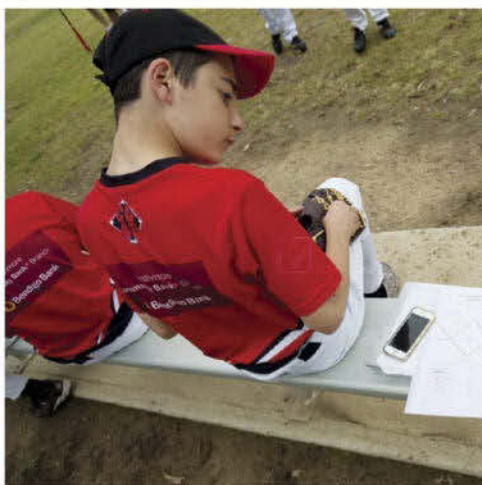
IT WAS back in June last year that *Inside Sport* and the Confederation of Australian Sport asked our readers: "What is it about your sports club that makes you so proud to wear their colours? What makes your mob special? Is yours the best sporting club in Australia? If so, we want to call you Australia's Sporting Club Of The Year. And reward your club with a Hyundai iMax."

The response was overwhelming. We received hundreds of entries, and then thousands of votes. But there could be only one winner: and the Hyundai iMax went to Essendon Baseball Club (EBC). Things got a bit squishy when they received their prize at the Ultimate Sports Expo in Melbourne late last year: there is a lot of emotion invested in the concept of "EBC Love". But it was back to business a week or so later, when *Inside Sport* turned up to document the feelgood club story of Australian sport in 2015.



LEFT *Inside Sport* editor Graem Sims hands over the Hyundai keys to EBC President Tony Cornish.





On any Sunday morning at Boeing Reserve in Strathmore, the EBC Little Leaguers turn out in droves. There they receive expert coaching. And LOTS of encouragement. Then, play ball!



Essendon is a baseball club with serious history: it was established back in 1893. They currently have 430 players and members, ranging from ages 5 to 80. Onfield success? They have that in spades. They've won six of the last seven Victorian Baseball Club Champion's Awards, which makes them the most successful club throughout all grades of baseball in the state. They have also won the last four A Grade premierships; a win this season will have them make history as the only club to win five in a row. There are currently eight college players in the USA with Essendon pedigree, two in the major league system, one major league player, and one Australian women's player.

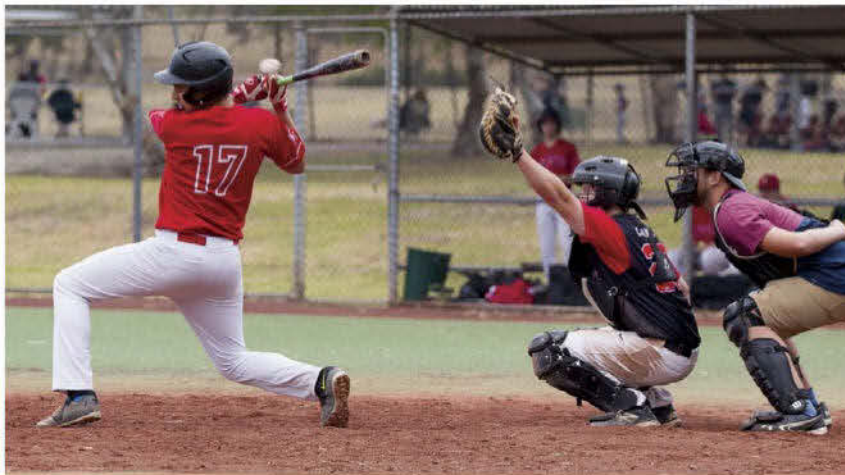
But these proud achievements are not allowed to foster a culture of privilege. Essendon is one of only a few A Grade clubs where all senior players "pay to play" no matter their playing status. As club president Tony Cornish says, "This demonstrates their commitment to our club and each other, which is a significant reason for our success on the field."

Off the field? This is another story that really impressed the judges. Junior development is a key part of the club culture. Junior coaches are routinely dispatched overseas for development. Most of the senior group now have partners and children that are active in the club, creating a family environment which has kept the playing group together and cultivated a new generation of passionate EBC youngbloods.



You don't win the title "Club Of The Year" without a bit of help ... Volunteers groom mounds and diamonds, keep score, and keep athletes nourished ...





In the afternoon the guns come out to play. Next stop, the Major League? They wouldn't be the first EBC product to make The Bigs.

The camaraderie to be found within the club has a name. "EBC Love" is a phrase frequently used by members, and is displayed on T-shirts, hats, website and correspondence. This supportive culture was highlighted recently when one of their number, Chris Lane, a product of the club playing in the US at college, was tragically killed in a random drive-by attack in the city of Oklahoma, shot in the back as he went on a training run through that city's streets. Says President Tony Cornish: "We came together and supported his family by holding a memorial game in Chris' honour. And we are now working with council and Major League Baseball to create the only junior purpose-built field in Australia in Chris' name."

The Chris Lane Memorial Field will open sometime soon this year. And the whole world will learn all about "EBC Love".



This is high-quality baseball straight from the heart, continuing a long tradition. The pride in the club is worn on the sleeve. Literally.



AT *Inside Sport*, we admire our great champions – but we understand that Australia's elite athletes' success would never have been possible without the support provided by a volunteer army of weekend warriors who keep the engine of community sport ticking over.

It's *grassroots* sport that is the heartbeat of all Australian communities, bringing people together in healthy competition, keeping them fit and active, building connections

and friendships. And grassroots sport is driven by a legion of characters of all ages, shapes and sizes, abilities and disabilities. These "legends in their own backyards" usually go unrecognised. *Inside Sport*, in partnership with the Confederation of Australian Sport – the peak body representing 90 sports in Australia – wanted to put that right. We wanted to find the truly unsung champions of Australian sport – and then reward their clubs with

great prizes to improve their facilities.

The Clubbies were presented in six categories. Nominations required written statements of between 50 and 500 words. A panel of five judges (CAS reps Rob Bradley, Lindsay Cane and Graham Fredericks, SEN broadcaster and passionate advocate of community sport Brett Phillips, and *Inside Sport* editor Graem Sims) and a popular online vote then decided the winners.

And the winners are ...

BEST COACH

Brad Crossingham, Mount Isa

Brad Crossingham has an inspiring passion for soccer development in North West Queensland and in Mount Isa especially. Besides working a 60-hour week, he volunteers countless hours to the sport, as administrator, player and referee. He is also the coach of FOUR teams: Parkside Juniors U10/11s, the U10s North West Queensland team (who travelled the whopping 920km this year from Mount Isa to Townsville to compete), plus the open women's and men's teams for the Isaroos Soccer Club (a club he helped found five years ago). Brad and his family give countless hours of volunteer time to the sport he loves.

Brad won for his club a \$1000 package of training equipment from Bownet, a revolutionary system of sports netting now kicking goals across the country.



BEST PLAYER

Elizabeth Pluimers, North Burleigh Surf Life Saving Club

In 2014, Elizabeth was the first person in surf life saving history to achieve the Triple Crown by winning the Coolangatta Gold, Nutri Grain Series and Australian Ironwoman Title during the one season. She also won Gold in the Open Board and Open Board Relay team at the Australian Championships that same year. She was a representative in both the Queensland team and the Australian teams, as well as landing a follow-up win in the Coolangatta Gold in 2015. But that's not solely why she won this award: during the season she attended numerous Nipper clinics around Australia and New Zealand; at North Burleigh Surf Club she has been involved with their program for disabled children. Elizabeth has been an inspiration to all young Nippers and Juniors. She is also an Athlete Ambassador at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.

Elizabeth won for her club a \$1000 package of swim equipment from Zoggs.



BEST TEAM

Sydney University Cricket Club Second Grade

This team combines outstanding success on the field with the most vibrant and friendly social atmosphere in Australian sport. They are renowned for welcoming opposition teams to share a lemonade and a laugh after a match in the dressing rooms, plus they have been a fantastic breeding ground for the young stars of their club.

Their prize: a \$1000 package of cricket equipment from Cooper Cricket, handcrafted bats made right here in Australia.



BEST CLUB STALWART

Brian McLoughlin, Tailem Bend Rowing Club

Brian has been the backbone of Tailem Rowing Club for 60 years and the President for 48 of them. He has seen floods wipe out the entire operation, but he knows how wonderful rowing can be for young people so he has fought for the club's survival. He has spent the last six years fighting for a grant from the local shire council for a floating pontoon to launch the boats after the flood of 2009 washed away their river frontage. Now that is achieved, he is resurrecting the club's competitive activity. At 83 years of age, he is still to be found selling pub raffle tickets every Friday night.

Brian won for his club a package of ten Polar heart-rate monitors worth \$1000.



BEST SPORTING EDUCATION

Palm Beach Currumbin State High School

For 20 years, PBC State High has delivered a world-class curriculum across 12 sports for student athletes on the southern Gold Coast and Northern NSW. The program has produced unrivalled numbers of national and international athletes whilst allowing them to maintain their academic rigour. The strength of the program lies in the resilience and humility that is developed in these young athletes whilst they pursue their dream. Pictured: the school's junior and senior sports stars of 2015 receive their awards from alumni John Szigeti (basketball), Chelsea Williams (surfing), Ben Hannant (rugby league) and special guest Jason Torney (AFL). Their prize: A package of ten heart-rate monitors from Polar, worth more than \$1000.



ABOUT CAS

The Confederation of Australian Sport (CAS) was established in 1976 to give the sports industry a united voice when lobbying governments and key stakeholders. Their aim is to contribute to a society in which the social, economic and health benefits of widespread participation in sport and recreation are properly valued. Through the promotion of participation in sport and physical activity, CAS aims to improve the health and well-being of individual Australians, while maximising the sport and leisure

industry's contribution to the Australian economy.

Recent research commissioned by CAS has put a dollar value on the contribution of sport to Australia. Would you believe \$23 billion per year? All this while state and federal governments' combined contribution to sport is currently less than \$1.3 billion. "So our government is getting an impressive 17:1 return on investment," points out CAS CEO Rob Bradley.

For more information, go to their website:

www.sportforall.com.au

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Hot Shot

Paging Andreas Zampa, please report directly to gate: the Slovakian skier encountered some trouble during his first run in the giant slalom at the FIS Ski World Cup round in Beaver Creek, Colorado. Austrian star Marcel Hirscher won the event.

PHOTO BY Doug Pensinger / Getty Images



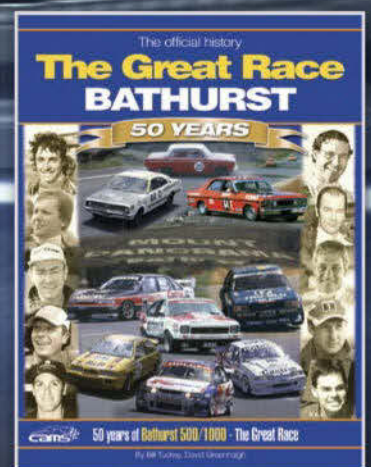
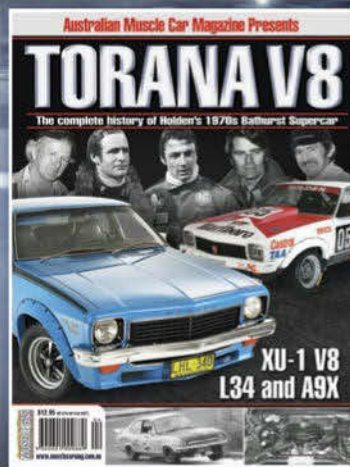
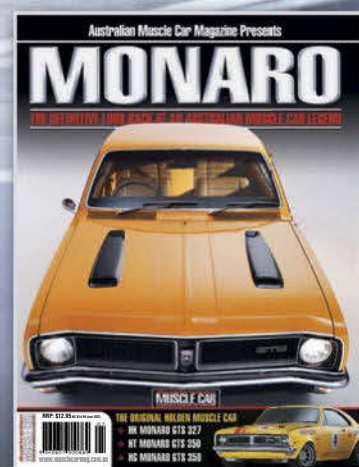
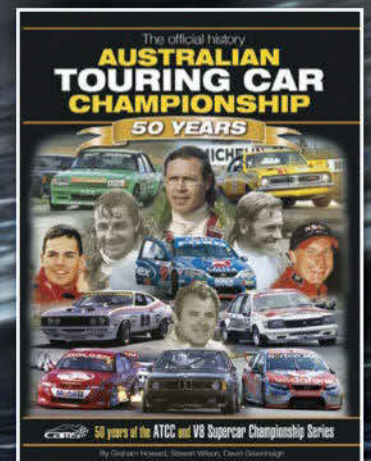
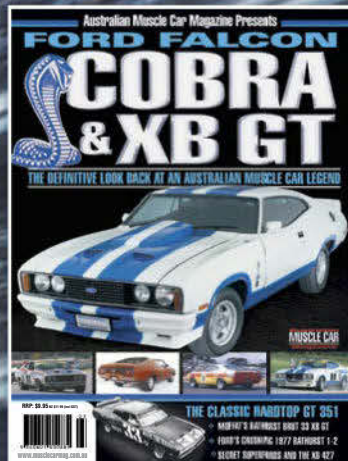
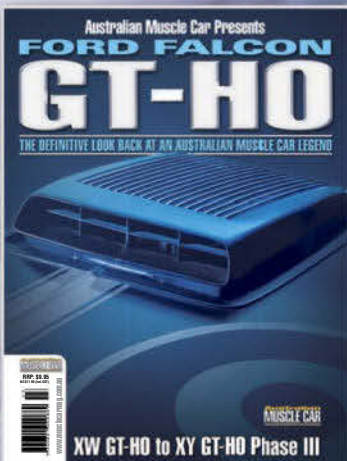
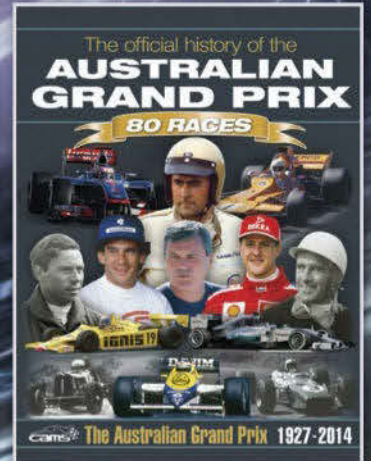
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▲ All the world's a gym. For sailors training for the Rio Olympics this year, like these Belgians, that "gym" is Guanabara Bay, which will host the sailing events for the Games. The backdrop is pretty, but it suffers from severe sewage and industrial pollution. Please don't drink the water ...

TALIQUA CLANCY & LOUISE BAWDEN

THE STAGE will be Copacabana Beach rather than Bondi's famous stretch, but Aussies could well be treated to a repeat of the rapturous scenes of Natalie Cook and Kerri Pottharst's golden Sydney 2000 Olympics moment ... at Rio 2016. Taliqua Clancy and Louise Bawden are among the top half-dozen women's beach volleyball pairs in the world; when they land in Brazil they'll be gunning for gold.

Rio will be Bawden's third Olympics. At the 2012 Games she partnered Becchara Palmer in one Aussie team, with Cook and Tamsin Hinchley in the other. In a previous life the Victorian, 34, was an indoor volleyballer, representing the home team in her Olympic debut in 2000.

Relatively speaking, Clancy, from Kingaroy in Queensland, is only just warming up, but the now-23-year-old has been based at the South Australian Institute of Sport since she was 17. Sure, these two six-foot-tall supreme athletes are at opposite ends of their sporting careers, but their record since teaming up in 2012 shows they complement each other on the sand perfectly.

At the end of the 2016 FIVB World Tour, also taking into consideration points earned from the 2015 series, the 15 top-ranked teams will automatically qualify for Rio. Clancy and Bawden are sitting very pretty in sixth spot, with a last-chance Asian Continental Cup tournament – to be held in Australia in June – as a back-up. Not that they'll need it, but that tournament may just present an opportunity for another Aussie women's side to book their flights to Brazil.

Here, Clancy and Bawden blast some myths about beach volleyball being a mere frolic on the sand. As you'll discover, this sport is a bit like water polo: unless you're fit, it's impossible to play properly. And these girls are *fit and firing*.



FIRST VOLLEYS

TALIQUA: "I started playing indoor volleyball in high school. I grew up in Kingaroy, Queensland. I started playing because my aunty played it at school and so when I got to high school I thought *I'm going to do it as well*. I was lucky enough to be talent-identified at a schools indoor cup event in Queensland, so I began going to a few camps. I was offered a scholarship with QAS, which was the first time I had played on sand. From there I earned a scholarship with the AIS for beach volleyball, based here in Adelaide. I moved here when I was 17 and I'm 23 now ... I've been here a while."

LOUISE: "I was also an indoor player prior to starting in beach. One of my very good friends, Tamsin Hinchley, competed at the Beijing Olympics with Natalie Cook. I travelled over to Beijing with another friend to support them. On that trip I was very inspired by their performance, and by the game."

"I started asking myself whether or not there might be an opportunity for me to get involved in beach volleyball before my days in sport were over. After that trip I pursued some training opportunities with Tamsin and then followed on with some contact with the national program, here in Adelaide, seeking out a chance to come over here and train."

Fortunately they allowed me to do so, which led to a full scholarship with the national team."

TRAINING DAY

TALIQUA: "Generally, we'll do gym three times a week, but this will depend on what part of the season we're in. At the moment we're in pre-season, so there's a bit more of a gym focus than on the sand. But we do still have five sand training sessions each week. Some of these – twice a week – currently include conditioning work. Two sessions are also dedicated to speed and agility. We are based in Adelaide at the South Australian Institute of Sport. They have man-made



"SERVING IS THE ONE SKILL WHERE, AS A PLAYER, YOU HAVE FULL CONTROL OF THE OUTCOME OF THE PLAY."

courts here and we use their gym as well. Our strength and conditioning coach, Ben Haines, is also part of the Institute's program."

LOUISE: "Each sand session lasts close to an hour and a half; we try to train for a period of time that extends the length of a long match. We are looking at maximum training times of 45 minutes to an hour, but probably around 80 minutes including warm-ups. At the moment our training has a real technical element to it. We break things down a little bit more than we would during the regular season. As we move closer to competition in the New Year, things will speed up; we'll do a lot more competitive-style drills and use more match-play training techniques."

SERVING IT UP

TALIQUA: "Serving is the one skill where, as a player, you have full control of the outcome of the play. Most new players start with an underarm serve. When you get to the top level of the game, you'll use a float serve. You hit the ball with a firm wrist, trying to reduce topspin. Another variation is the jump/float. Here, you're

jumping and making higher contact with the ball. It is all up to the server; this serve drops faster, or stays in the air for a range of movement. There is also a jump serve, which is the serve I do a lot. It is similar to spiking the ball. You throw it up with a bit

of top spin, take a spike approach, and then contact it. You reach the ball at a higher point, which means you can very quickly change the ball's angle and trajectory."

DIGGING IT

TALIQUA: "In most beach volleyballers' minds, you can't practise passing – or digging – enough. It is all about the reps. Unfortunately it doesn't get any easier the higher the level you play at. It is one of those skills which you have to keep fine-tuning. It is important to make sure you're watching the ball onto your platform. Wherever you are facing when you make contact is where the ball will go. If your hips are facing outside the court, the ball will go outside the court. When I was a lot younger there would be targets set up in the middle of the court which we'd aim at. But again, it's all about repetition." ▶



SHARP SPIKES

LOUISE: "You start with the foot opposite to the hand you're going to hit with. I am left-handed, so the steps in my approach will be *right-left-right*. My right foot will finish slightly forward. At that point I will be loaded into a jump position. As I'm taking off, I'll be swinging both of my arms through up high above my head, reaching as high as I can. Then my left elbow traps back and I'm looking to make contact with the upper third of the ball. Then, using my wrist, I'll roll through and as I swing I'll follow my arm swing through back down towards my knees. Different things, like the height of your elbow, can sometimes be technically adjusted in order to maximise the contact height of your spike."

BLOCK PARTY

LOUISE: "We do a lot of different drills that develop our footwork and lateral shuffling. We also work a lot on penetration. You want to try and get your hands over the plane of the net without touching it. So the way I move my arms, the speed at which I'm locking them out, and staying really strong and balanced through my core is all very important for creating a block that's taking away the maximum amount of space for my opponent. The way that I'm pushing over the net is something I practise a lot. Coaches will hold small balls so that I have to overextend and reach further to really stretch and maximise my ability to impact on the hitter."

GO GIRL!

TALIQUA: "Lou's strength is that she is very athletic, but she is also a very determined and competitive player. The attributes she brings to the court means she plays a *very big game*. She is a great spiker; people really struggle to dig her balls. And she is always for the team, which makes us so strong."

LOUISE: "Taliqua is very physically talented; she is a gifted athlete. But more than that, I think her determination, her love for the game, and her ambition to reach the highest standard she can, really drives our team a lot. She is a very fast learner; she picks up things very quickly and applies them well."

BODY MECHANICS

TALIQUA: "We do a lot of shoulder rehab to keep our scaps really strong. We do quite a lot of Theraband. Also a lot of glute work to make sure we don't injure our backs. This keeps our knees in check and maintains our overall strength. They are the key areas. Leg strength is very important."

We hit the gym pretty hard. We play a pretty physical game, us two. Sometimes we'll do circuits in the gym, sometimes we'll do cluster sets, but mainly it's all about repeat power; just being able to get off the sand quickly. For me, it's about digging and getting up fast so I can go and spike the next ball. Squats, single-legs, it all keeps us ticking over."

LOUISE: "Anyone looking to get fit should definitely try beach volleyball; it's probably the best all-over body workout going around. But for us specifically we need to really address knees, back and shoulders as priorities for injury-prevention. Part of our strength and conditioning routine is always looking to increase our leg power and the stability of our joints through our hips, knees and glutes. And definitely supporting the shoulder joints to be able to sustain the loads required to spike up to 1000 balls a week."

SHIFTING SANDS

TALIQUA: "You kinda get conditioned to the sand after playing on it for a while. But the stronger you are, the better you can hold





"WE ARE DEFINITELY GOING FOR GOLD IN RIO; A PODIUM FINISH IS RIGHT THERE FOR US."

GOING FOR GOLD

TALIQUA: "We are definitely going for gold in Rio; a podium finish is right there for us. So it's really exciting that we've given ourselves a really good opportunity at the end of the season to really go for it."

LOUISE: "We are in sixth in Olympic ranking; the top 15 automatically qualify for the Games. Every time we secure a great tournament result on the World Tour that better our average, our worst one will drop off and that new one will take its place ... and then obviously improve our standing. We are hoping to keep our improving form going right up until the end of the Tour."

- James Smith

yourself. Our speed and agility sessions keep us efficient on top of the sand. They help us use the right muscles and take the right steps to get to the ball."

LOUISE: "From the feedback we're given from our speed and agility sessions, having your hips facing in the direction you want to move is a big determinant for how fast you're going to be able to run and maintain balance. We do lots of drills where we're changing direction, running backwards and having to turn around, or hit the ground and get up again. We are always getting feedback from our coach about our foot speed and hip direction, all of which supports our maximum output."

TOUGH QUESTIONS

TALIQUA: "Peoples' questions about our hand signals are often interesting and funny. They

watch you making them and try to figure out what they all mean. But actually it's just so simple. One finger pointed means 'line'; two fingers might mean 'block-angle' and one hand just tells you the position on the court to serve to. They must think we're doing amazing tricks, but it's actually all pretty basic."

LOUISE: "Probably questions that some people ask about bikinis are pretty irrelevant and obsolete in this day and age, in my opinion. I don't think our playing uniform is something that requires a lot of attention, especially when we're competing at the extreme-high level we are. We invest a lot in being really refined, professional athletes. So the bikini issue should fairly die a natural death."

ON THE RUN

THESE HEALTHY MEALS ARE IDEAL FOR BUSY ATHLETES ON THE GO.



GRILLED FISH WITH PEA, FETA & CHICKPEA SALAD

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **\$4.55**
Time to make: **15 min**

2 cups frozen peas
1 x 400g can no-added-salt chickpeas, rinsed, drained
3 cups baby spinach
1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
100g reduced-fat feta, crumbled
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 x 150g firm white fish fillets
Lemon wedges, to serve

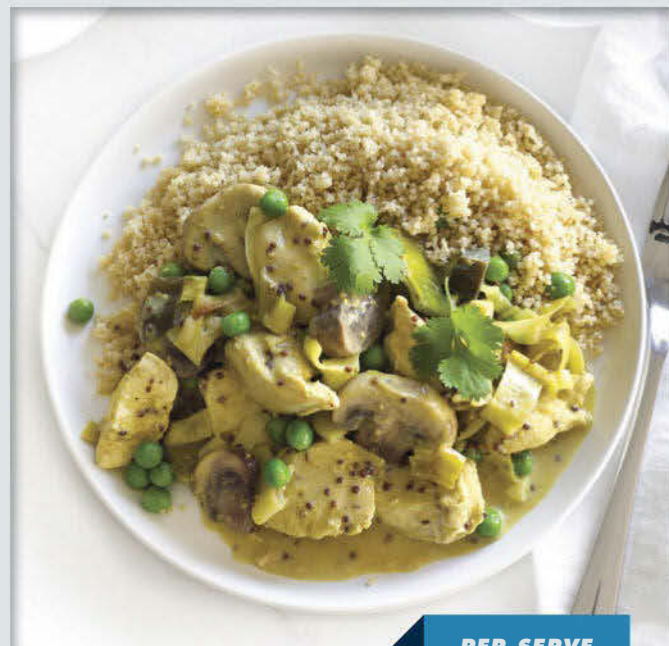
Dressing

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Juice of 1 lemon

- 1 Place peas in a bowl and cover with boiling water; stand for one-two minutes, or until peas are tender. Drain well and leave to cool.
- 2 Combine peas, chickpeas, baby spinach, parsley and feta in a large salad bowl; toss well.
- 3 Make dressing: whisk all ingredients together in a jug; pour over salad and set aside.
- 4 Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook fish for two-three minutes each side, or until cooked through.
- 5 Divide pea salad among serving plates. Top with grilled fish and serve with lemon wedges.

PER SERVE

1670kJ/400cal
Protein 39.9g
Total Fat 16.7g
Sat Fat 4.3g
Carbs 17.9g
Sugars 2.6g
Fibre 9.3g
Sodium 486mg
Calcium 193mg
Iron 5.9mg



CREAMY MUSTARD & LEEK CHICKEN WITH COUSCOUS

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **\$3.90**
Hands-on time: **10 min**
Cooking time: **20 min**

1 large leek, washed, finely sliced
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
500g chicken breast fillets, chopped
5 teaspoons English mustard
2 teaspoons wholegrain mustard
1 cup wholemeal couscous
400g button mushrooms, sliced
3/4 cup frozen peas
3 tablespoons (80g) Philadelphia Light Cream for Cooking

- 1 Heat one tablespoon of olive oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Saute leek and garlic for five minutes, or until leeks are soft.
- 2 Add chicken and mustards to pan; cook for five minutes, or until chicken is lightly brown all over.
- 3 Meanwhile, place couscous in a bowl and cover with one cup boiling water. Cover and leave to steam for three-four minutes, then fluff grains with a fork.
- 4 Add mushrooms to chicken and cook for two-three minutes. Add peas to pan with 1/2 cup water; cook for eight-ten minutes over low heat until chicken is cooked.
- 5 Add cream to pan and cook for another one-two minutes, or until sauce slightly thickens and is heated through. Divide couscous among four serving plates. Top with creamy mustard chicken and garnish with herbs, if you prefer.

PER SERVE

1973kJ/472cal
Protein 39.2g
Total Fat 15.1g
Sat Fat 4.7g
Carbs 39.8g
Sugars 2.2g
Fibre 10.0g
Sodium 286mg
Calcium 47mg
Iron 2.3mg



Protein, carbs or both?
Let your Accredited Practising Dietitian set the record straight.



GRILLED SALMON WITH ASIAN SESAME SLAW, BROWN RICE & QUINOA

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **\$4.90**
Time to make: **15 min**

- 1 x 400g bag coleslaw
- 1 medium red capsicum, finely sliced
- 1 large carrot, grated or cut into very fine sticks
- 1½ cups frozen edamame beans, defrosted, shelled
- 2 tablespoons gluten-free reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted
- 4 x 110g boneless salmon fillets
- 1 tablespoon reduced-salt gluten-free tamari
- 2 x 250g pouches microwavable brown rice and quinoa

- 1** Place coleslaw, capsicum, carrot and edamame beans in a salad bowl. Whisk mayonnaise with two tablespoons boiling water until dressing is smooth and creamy. Pour over salad and toss gently to combine. Sprinkle salad with sesame seeds and set aside.
- 2** Coat salmon fillets with tamari in a small dish. Spray a large non-stick frying pan with olive oil set over medium-high heat. Cook salmon, flesh side down, for three-four minutes. Carefully turn over to the skin side and cook for a further three-four minutes, for medium, or until done to your liking.
- 3** Heat brown rice and quinoa mix according to packet instructions. Serve Asian sesame slaw with grilled salmon and steamed rice and quinoa. Garnish with fresh coriander, if you prefer.

PER SERVE

2416kJ/578cal
Protein 37.3g
Total Fat 20.3g
Sat Fat 4.5g
Carbs 55.4g
Sugars 9.1g
Fibre 11.8g
Sodium 406mg
Calcium 66mg
Iron 3.1mg



SPICY STEAK WITH MEXICAN BLACK BEAN SALAD

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **\$5.10**
Hands-on time: **10 min**
Cooking time: **10 min**

- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons chilli powder
- 4 x 100g lean sirloin steaks

Mexican black bean salad

- 1 x 400g can black beans, rinsed, drained
- 3 cups frozen corn kernels, defrosted
- 1 large red capsicum, finely diced
- 1-2 jalapenos or long red chillies, finely chopped
- 3 shallots, finely sliced
- 4 large tomatoes, diced
- 1 medium ripe avocado, diced

- 1** Mix spices in a small bowl, then rub evenly over each steak.
- 2** Make Mexican salad: combine all ingredients in a salad bowl and season with cracked black pepper. Cover and set aside.
- 3** Preheat barbecue hotplate or grill pan to medium-high heat. Spray with olive oil and cook steaks for two-three minutes each side for medium, or until done to your liking. Set aside to rest for two-three minutes, then slice steak thinly.
- 4** Divide salad among four serving plates. Top with sliced steak and serve with coriander leaves and lime wedges, if you prefer.

PER SERVE

2586kJ/619cal
Protein 54.8g
Total Fat 21.5g
Sat Fat 6.0g
Carbs 42.3g
Sugars 10.7g
Fibre 15.7g
Sodium 128mg
Calcium 83mg
Iron 7.8mg



This article is taken from the latest issue of *Healthy Food Guide* magazine (rrp \$5.60).

WORTH THE WEIGHT

Australia's Healthy Weight Week (AHWW), from February 15-21, is a great opportunity to kickstart some healthy changes to your diet. Supported by the Dietitians Association of Australia, AHWW 2016 aims to

get more Australians cooking at home. Research shows that people who cook at home more often tend to be healthier and manage their weight better. So get inspired to make some simple changes towards smart eating. There's a heap of resources available at www.healthyweightweek.com.au

Visit www.daa.asn.au
or freecall 1800 812 942



What is an APD? Accredited Practising Dietitian. APDs are university-qualified experts who can give advice in all areas related to food and nutrition. This includes conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, eating disorders, obesity, food allergies, gastrointestinal disorders and general nutrition advice.



FIRST CLASS

LES IS MORE

Les Mills was a New Zealand track and field athlete who became Mayor of Auckland from 1992-1998; he opened his first gym in that city in 1968. His son, Phillip, became involved, and pioneered the first Bodypump class in 1990. Today, Les Mills programs (Bodypump and a raft of others) have expanded into 70 countries and at last count into around 10,000 fitness clubs around the globe. This is one serious fitness phenomenon. Why the attraction? Let's call it the rock-star treatment: a high-energy session to modern music that will shed flab and tone muscle with a smile on your face and rhythm in your feet. Program director Rachael Newsham (pictured) gives us the drill on a few of the Les Mills faves.

BODYPUMP

"There really is nothing like it in the world. It is like turning up to a very incredible rock concert environment, but one where you're part of the act, because you're on the floor being put through your paces, and there's all these lights and audio visual stuff and the sound is incredible. You feel electric."

"Bodypump makes weight training super-accessible. There is clear coaching, a set program to follow interpreted by music, and a group atmosphere, so it feels great. When Bodypump started it was such a different way to exercise. Weights were actually made fun – if you visualise somewhere like Venice Beach with men and muscle, it extinguishes that stigma."

"I felt a connection straight away – the music drew me towards it. Music has long been a top motivator for people. It shifts emotional states, and quitting is an emotional state; you feel you've actually reached your maximum, because it hurts and it feels too hard. Whereas your body will go further if there is a motivation to do that. The *Rocky* theme, for example, stirs up that feeling of 'Yeah, I've got this – I feel powerful – I can DO this!' It makes you work harder."

"These are light weights. You work with a hollow bar, maybe one or two kilos, and then the weights vary from one kilo to 2.5 – up to 5kg. Some clubs carry 10kg weights for the more adapted consumer who's worked their way up to that level of endurance, but they're generally very light weights for high-repetition patterns. The idea is that the lighter the weight the more repetitions you can do."

ROCKING UP

"When you arrive for your first class, the best thing you can do is introduce yourself to the teacher because they're there to support you. The worst thing to do is to try to blend in because then the teacher will struggle to help you get through it. They will direct you to get all

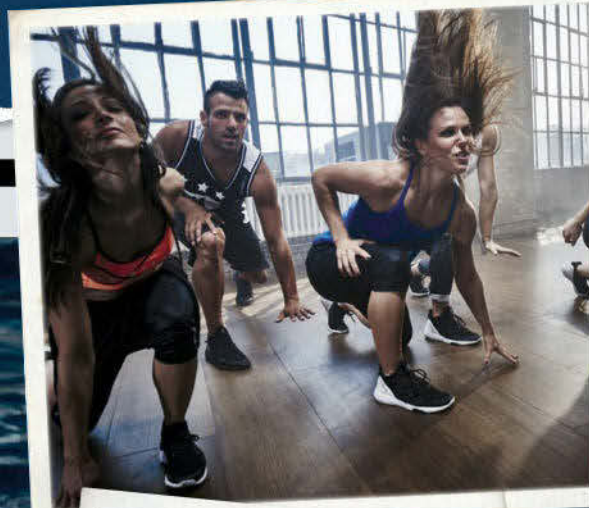
the equipment that you need, and they'll give you guidelines throughout the class. Each different body part demands a different weight category in terms of what you put on the bar. Some exercisers will assume that more weight equals more results, but actually if you put too much weight on, you're not going to sustain the amount of time set aside to work that body part – you're going to blow out super early, have a negative experience and probably never go back. The feeling of success comes from incremental increases in the weight."

"The coach is feeling the rhythm for the class, using cues, so you can actually feel the timing. We talk about time under tension – for example, we might take four counts to do a squat, going down really slowly, and then two counts to come up. So the workout is constantly varying the rhythm. There is definitely an aerobic element because your heart-rate is elevated, but resistance training is the foundation."

BODYCOMBAT

"Bodycombat is a cardio-based workout. It can be quite intimidating because it's a different movement vocabulary. But we know the results that martial artists get are incredible, so we take the principles and make a workout from them. So it's NOT intimidating, and it's friendly because we put music to it."

"We spend the first eight to ten minutes in the warm-up teaching all the



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different strikes that you're going to use, drawing from boxing, kickboxing, taekwondo, karate, kung fu, Brazilian jiu jitsu ... You don't need any equipment – you just rock up. You do move off the spot, but it's not dance steps; it's simple linear strikes and blocks. People love it."

SH'BAM

"In Bodypump and Bodycombat there's no dancing. If you want to dance, give Sh'bam a go. Sh'bam gives you the freedom to do anything you want with simple dance moves. It makes you feel young and cool again. You don't have to smash your body, but you still get a workout, and you're really having fun."

MUSIC

"We secure music licences from top record labels, so they're current songs you might hear on the radio. And we're constantly fine-tuning them. But each class requires a very different style of music to bring out the best in people. In a Bodypump workout, you'll need something uplifting and driving as you're lifting the bar off the floor and cleaning it over your head, whereas in a Bodycombat workout, if we're smashing the air, the last thing we want for 55 minutes is the world's happiest, smiliest music. That's not going to help you draw out your inner fighter. It is also bpm-related (beats per minute). We will vary it

throughout the whole class so we can get a full range of motion with the various kicks, but when we're using shorter levers like our arms, we're trying to build up speed, then the bpm will increase. When you're punching at 160bpm you feel incredibly empowered and this endorphin rush kicks in. But we don't actually hit anything – it's a totally non-contact workout."

ON YOUR FEET

"In Bodypump you need a shoe that's going to give you stability because you're lifting weights. You need to feel the floor beneath you, but you don't need much cushioning because there's no excessive jumping or impact. Whereas in Bodycombat we're a mixed impact workout, so there IS pulsing backwards and forwards, and there is a jump every now and then. So you do need a bit more cushioning in your shoe."

PHOTOS COURTESY Reebok

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progress

running



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← GREAT DRIVE

A revolutionary carbon-composite crown design in TaylorMade's new M1 Driver has resulted in a significant decrease in overall club weight. The M1 Driver's structure also allowed engineers to lower the club's centre of gravity. A ground-breaking T-Track system, housing 25g of adjustable weight, has also been added, enabling the golfer to personalise their driver like never before. The TaylorMade research and development team's internal acoustic management techniques have led to the M1 Driver's best-in-class sound, which has been meticulously crafted to control vibration and pitch at impact. The M1 430 (pictured) and M1 460 models are offered in one of three premium stock shafts. RRP \$749 (430 model). Visit www.taylormadegolf.com.au for more info.

↓ BACKUP POWER

Seiko's Sportura Chronograph Perpetual is powered by all light sources. It boasts a six-month power storage and power reserve indicator. It also features a stopwatch which measures 24 hours in fifth-of-a-second increments (with split-time facility). Other features are dual-time capability, hour, minute and second hand, a perpetual calendar that automatically adjusts for short months and leap years until February 2100 and a stainless-steel case and band. The Sportura Chronograph Perpetual is also 100m water-resistant, has sapphire glass, a screw-down crown and tachymeter. RRP \$825. Phone 1300 300 776 to find out more.



↑ BANDING TOGETHER

SKLZ Mini Bands are an effective and versatile training tool that can be used to increase strength and stability in the upper and lower body. Mini Bands are ideal for lateral movement exercises, hip and glute activation and shoulder stabilisation. The Mini Band set pictured offers three different levels of resistance – light, medium, and heavy. RRP \$30. To find out more head to <https://www.sklz.com.au/p-64-mini-bands.aspx>

↓ MORE BITE

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← ON THE FREEWAY

The new Powakaddy Freeway Range consists of three models: the FW3, FW5 and FW7 (pictured) and features the latest in technology and Euro styling – including the exclusive Plug and Play Battery Connection System. This means no more messy wires; just drop it in and you're ready to go. The top of the range FW7 EBS (Electronic Braking System) has three levels of progressive braking, making it ideal for hilly golf courses. All three modern and sleek-styled models come with the lightweight and fast-folding Power Frame and a whisper-quiet motor. RRP from \$1799. For more information about the exciting new Powakaddy range, visit www.powakaddy.com.au or call (03) 9795 1743.

↓ IN THE POCKET

PocJox, the game-changing range of shorts and compression tights, deliver a technically advanced fabric to improve performance in the gym or on the run. They are uniquely designed with fitted sweat-resistant pockets which store your mobile phone, card and key. They provide ultimate support, durability and comfort during any type of exercise. Australian-owned and designed, PocJox was founded by one of Sydney's most sought-after personal trainers, Matt Chapman. PocJox ... as worn by our "Drinks With" subject in our January 2016 issue, Daniel Kowalski. RRP from \$59.95. Visit www.pocjox.com for more info.



↑ HEAD SMART

Canterbury's most popular style of headgear worldwide, their Ventilator Headgear, features a unique aero-matrix design and superior closed-cell foam for protection and comfort. It also boasts a strengthened ear piece and polycotton liner for durability. Lightweight and flexible, the Ventilator is able to absorb maximum shock. As worn by Cronulla Sharks hooker Michael Ennis. RRP \$119.95. Available from Canterbury, Rebel, Amart Sports and all leading sport stores. Visit www.canterburynz.com.au for more info.



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December's Freeze Frame Freebies caption competition was won by Joe Crisafulli of Griffith, NSW.

Email your entries for this month's Freeze Frame comp on page 20 to iscomps@insidesport.com.au, or check out the website: www.insidesport.com.au. If, however, you are still "analogue", and resist the march of technology, you can still post your entries the traditional way to Freeze Frame Comp, Inside Sport, PO Box 5555, St Leonards, NSW 1590.

For enquiries about this section, please contact Adam Jackson at ajackson@nextmedia.com.au

QUIZ ANSWERS (P28):

1. Oklahoma City Thunder (after Jazz, Heat and Magic)
2. Michael van Gerwen 3. The Ollie 4. 2010 5. Sydney/South Melbourne Swans (14 times) 6. Denver 7. 2000 (Young Australia) 8. Kolkata Knight Riders 9. Jackie Stewart 10. 1954
ANSWER TO NEXT: Edberg, the "cool Swede", calmly took the fifth set 6-3, snuffing out the Australian's hopes and ruining the party to win the second of his six career grand slams. Cash would have his time in the sun later that year, winning the Wimbledon Men's singles title.



DAVE HONIG

When a showbiz personality hires a personal trainer to bring about a physical transformation, they usually read from the Dave Honig playbook.

BACK IN 1976, Sylvester Stallone brought out *Rocky*. Not everyone thought it was a great movie. It was, in fact, so crammed with pugilistic and cinematic clichés that many serious critics were wondering whether we were victims of some elusive irony that never, even subtly, declared itself. But the most admirable thing about the movie was the way Stallone, determined to play the part of the lead character himself, trained for the role. Via a rigorous personal regime, Stallone got himself fit and muscular and passed into filmic, if not fistic, legend.

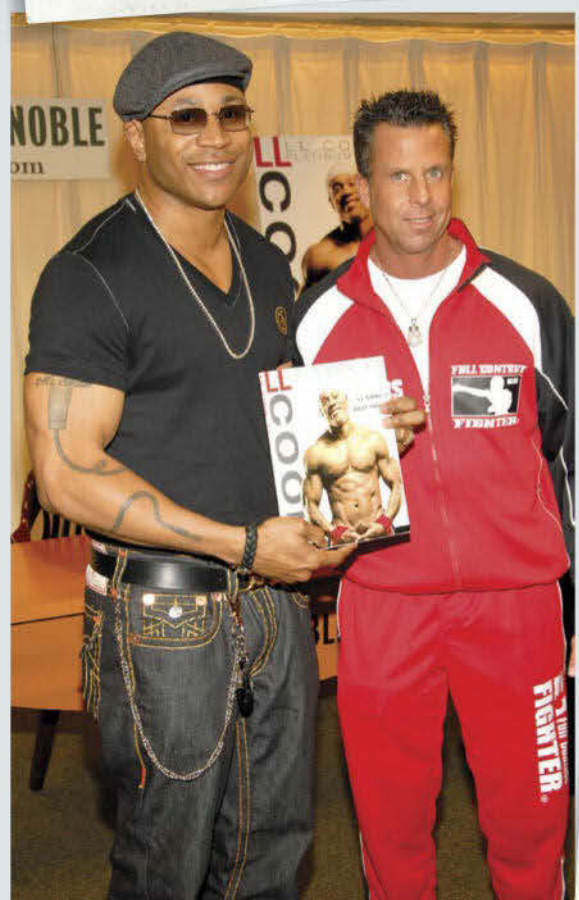
Before that, fit actors and other stars were people who came from other backgrounds. Kirk Douglas had been an acrobat before he hit the screens. Charles Bronson gained his muscular physique as a hard-rock miner. His toughness was no act. Occasionally, a muscle man would make it big, like Clint Walker, who played the lead role in *Cheyenne*. Sometimes, a genuine sporting champion would make the transition and become famous in his second career, as when Johnny Weissmuller played Tarzan.

As time went on, and our body ideal began to change, only the utterly chiselled escaped the hyper-critical objectifications of the masses who

were encouraged by the ever-intrusive, pullulating paparazzi. The pressure for stars to escape manufactured phenomena such as “fat shaming” and to look good, not just for roles, but *all the time*, brought their fitness levels closer to those of athletes. The personal trainer became *de rigueur*. The astronomical amounts these stars got paid meant these new professionals became as essential and ubiquitous as plastic surgeons for people in the public eye.

Probably the most dramatic physical transformation of any star in recent times has been that of Hugh Jackman. For his role as the shredded mutant superhero in *Wolverine*, Jackman turned to the latest celebrity star trainer, Luke Istomin. Jackman’s muscle development was so pronounced that the wardrobe department had to beg Istomin to stop training him, as they couldn’t keep up, even while the movie was being made.

The most well-known and pioneering of personal trainers to stars of screen, stage and sport is Dave “Scooter” Honig. After 22 years of physical education in New York’s tough school system, the dedicated Honig parlayed his energy and experience, taking the risk of getting into personal training. Honig’s



A few of Honig’s star pupils (LEFT TO RIGHT): Luis Collazo (hitting), LL Cool J and Zab Judah.



PHOTOS BY Getty Images

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NOVAK DJOKOVIC

The Wolverine wardrobe department asked Hugh Jackman to stop working out during filming...

achievement goes both ways: he has brought the elite fitness levels of sport closer to the world's biggest stars, and he has been instrumental in bringing the notion of personal fitness into sport, which is probably, in many ways, the *greater* achievement, especially applied to boxing. In the process, he's played a big part in bringing the two worlds, stardom and sport, together.

In the world of showbiz, Honig has prepared an endless list of A-listers, such as actor Leonardo DiCaprio (for his role in *The Departed*), dynamic R&B singer Fantasia and producer, director, screenwriter, playwright, author and songwriter Tyler Perry, for movie roles, television appearances or for life as body ideals for their slavishly devoted fans. Most notably, he is the man who transformed the famous rapper, LL Cool J into the boutique "thug" with a build like Evander Holyfield's. Cool J's simple calorie-burning philosophy was developed during concert tours, when he and Honig would improvise, finding football fields for pull-ups on goalposts, or doing wind sprints.

Once, a rabbi approached Honig because he wanted to perform the longest Chassidic dance ever recorded on the Chabad telethon. Rabbi Yossi Cunin shed 100 pounds for the feat, sticking to a routine that began with a walk around the block – all he could handle at first. Then he'd run one block and walk two. He graduated to swimming and mountain biking. Eventually, he was running up the stairs of Dodger Stadium with weights strapped to him. Come telethon time, he performed the vigorous, rapturous solo dance for six straight hours, in his rabbinic clobber, entering the *Guinness Book Of Records*.

Honig is the ultimate celebrity personal trainer, and the ultimate celebrity as a personal trainer. He can take the popular approach, and is known for his sharp and, at times, zany television appearances. He's authored and co-authored several books including LL Cool J's best-seller *LL Cool J's Platinum Workout* and *Ringside Training Principles*. But he's also a serious and scientific fitness and health maven, appearing on television regularly, sometimes just to talk about nutrition.

His involvement in boxing has been part of a revolution. There was a time, not long ago, when the idea of a personal trainer had no place in the sport. Boxers were considered the fittest, most durable athletes on the planet, and could teach everyone else a thing or two about getting fit.

They trained for their sport, and that was enough. The idea of "personal" fitness was foreign, but even for those boxers with more individual regimes, the notion of "outsourcing" conditioning was inconceivable.

As knowledge increased and training methods were tailored to individual needs, reflecting newfound scientific information, the educated personal fitness trainer began to make inroads into the "manly art". Honig knows the biomechanics of boxing. Every aspect of it, from twisting into a punch to extricating oneself from clinches, demands intensive conditioning and just the right level of musculature. Some of the exercises, such as Russian twists, are unusual and demanding, but the conditioning they achieve is sensational for ring performance.

Boxers who have been exposed to Honig's personalised system can be seen flipping tractor tyres, pushing carts or doing "central nervous tests" like raising their feet off the ground from a supine position and touching Scooter's hands. The old notion of "roadwork"

to increase endurance now focuses on the cardiovascular challenges of the fight, which is divided into rounds. Therefore, Honig tailors interval training to each individual boxer's CV needs. In the end, they sustain sprints and various other exercises for the length of a round – two minutes for prelim boys, three for elite fighters. Once, a fighter would ensure he didn't

"run out of puff." Now, he focuses on "supplying active muscles with oxygen and nutrients, while directing carbon dioxide and waste away from those muscles" – not the sort of thinking fighters are renowned for. Honig pushes fighters to the limit, but ensures every effort, like every punch, is directed at the goal.

One of his most remarkable triumphs came last year when Luis Collazo, a fighter considered years past it, came back fitter and stronger than ever after a shoulder operation to kyo world-rater Victor Ortiz. Honig also conditioned Zab Judah to withstand Mickey Ward's savage body assaults in 1998. His work was tested in round eight, when Ward landed his celebrated left hook to the body. Judah was hurt, but saw out the round and went on to win on points.

Many men and women – footballers, boxers, basketballers, singers, actors, or businessmen – have *cursed* Dave "Scooter" Honig for driving them remorselessly, but also *thanked* him for taking their personal fitness needs seriously and transforming almost every aspect of their being, starting with their body.

– Robert Drane

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Set on the lush and unspoilt East Coast of Bali, **Hotel Komune Resort and Beach Club** is blessed with a hypnotising view of the world famous Keramas surf break. The resort is conveniently only 50 minutes away from Ngurah Rai International Airport. With its pristine volcanic beach, this 4 star beachfront Bali resort offers a wonderful experience of spending leisure time in a natural luxury hotel. Sumptuously appointed accommodation with artistic furniture, this unique Bali resort articulates the identity of the Island of the Gods.

In 2015 Hotel Komune launched its new Health Hub facility at the Bali resort after recognising demand from guests for further health and wellness experiences. The Health Hub features a yoga centre, 25m training pool, functional training centre, day spa, health café and fitness centre.

For more information, visit www.komuneresorts.com/keramasbali



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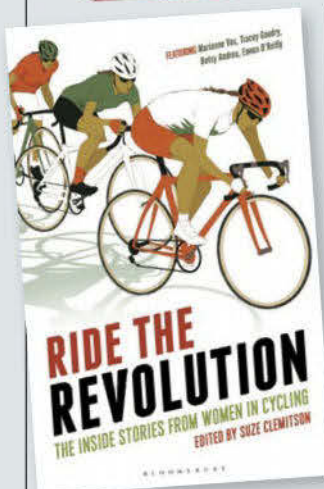
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BOOKS



RIDE THE REVOLUTION THE INSIDE STORIES FROM WOMEN IN CYCLING

EDITED BY SUZE CLEMENTSON, BLOOMSBURY, \$35

This anthology observes the places that women in cycling get to, and we're not just talking about the ones on the bikes. Champion riders such as Marianne Vos feature, but also female voices that have left an indelible mark on the sport – Lance Armstrong whistle-blowers Betsy Andreu and Emma O'Reilly make their powerful contributions once again. But this book is also plenty breezy, and reflects a sport in the midst of a growth phase. As the editor notes, this rise has been driven by cycling countries outside the traditional European sphere such as Australia, where figures such as Tracey Gaudry and Rochelle Gilmore (who also feature in the book) have been very influential.

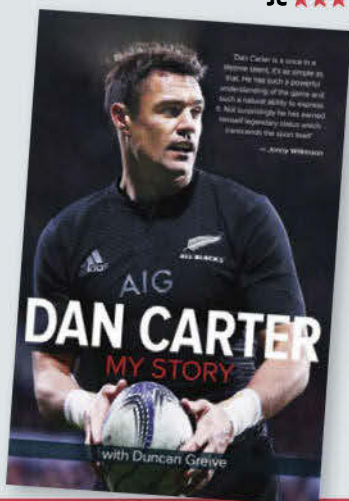
– Jeff Centenera ★★

DAN CARTER: MY STORY

BY DAN CARTER WITH DUNCAN GRIEVE, HARPERSPORTS, \$39.99

This autobiography contains at least one delight for the Australian rugby fan – the comforting thought that the Wallabies or any of our Super Rugby teams will never have to face Dan Carter on the field again. He was pure, unalloyed excellence for the All Blacks and the Crusaders for a decade-plus, forming an axis with the also-retired Richie McCaw that was implacable. Where McCaw was the grit, Carter was the class – what surprises in his story is, for such a gifted player, he wasn't much of a standout in his junior days. He went on to win everything in rugby, but the most interesting moments are the times he *didn't*: having to sit out the 2011 World Cup final, the shock upset in '07, the infamous "court session" after a loss to the Springboks in 2004 recognised as the turning point in the Blacks' decade of dominance. Incorporating a diary-style account of his final season, Carter is better when connecting with deeply felt subjects rather than recounting glory days, such as his recollections of the Christchurch earthquake of 2011 and its impact on his community.

– JC ★★



MICHAEL CLARKE ASHES DIARY 2015

BY MICHAEL CLARKE, PAN MACMILLAN, \$34.99

Fairly or not, this book will be remembered within cricket for how good a coach Michael Clarke's dog, Jerry, might be ... As this *Ashes Diary* landed on the public as the first big statement Clarke would make since retirement, it was perhaps unavoidable that there was going to be a fixation on the score-settling. Clarke, however, did not back down on that front, making a wholesale rebuke to the sniping that seemed to swirl around him. Old mate Andrew Symonds and former coach John Buchanan attracted special mention, but Clarke's indictment was broad – maybe the charged atmosphere of an Ashes series (and a losing one at that) had something to do with it, but Clarke took to the woe-is-me cry all too readily.

But here's the thing: Michael Clarke was often treated unfairly during one of the most interesting careers in Australian cricket, and usually by people who couldn't reconcile an athlete who exuded style, yet also had plenty of substance. A hefty memoir is surely down the line, which will be helped by broader perspective – Clarke himself offers a brief insight into the crazy last year-and-a-half with a recollection about the death of Phil Hughes, during which time he was being hailed for leading the nation through its collective mourning. "I don't think I had time to grieve personally. Maybe that was a mistake, because now that I think about it, since his death, I'm not sure I've loved cricket in the same way."

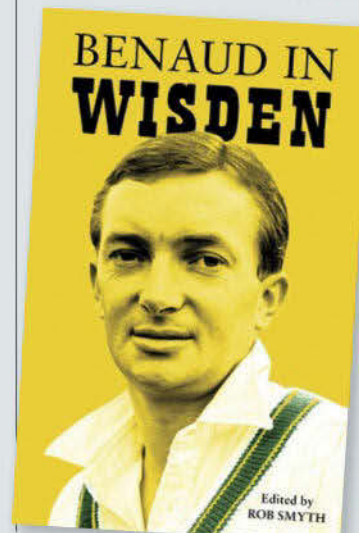
– JC ★★

BENAUD IN WISDEN

EDITED BY ROB SMYTH, JOHN WISDEN, \$24.99

Yet another entry in the outpouring of published Richie love, but *Wisden's* volume is a good one. The multi-faceted nature of the Benaud legacy is best captured by *Wisden's* Cricketers of the Year for 1962: he is acclaimed for his tremendous all-round ability and positive captaincy, but Benaud also contributes the write-up for another of the players recognised, Alan Davidson (who repays the favour by writing the foreword for this book). While there are many interesting perspectives offered on the man who editor Rob Smyth calls "cricket's best friend", the best stuff comes from Benaud himself. As the point is made in the book, Richie didn't resort to saying "in my day" in his commentary, because every new day was still part of his cricketing life. This being *Wisden*, there's a rather fulsome account of the matches during Benaud's career, but seeing how his playing accomplishments are not given their proper due, it is welcome.

– JC ★★



THE MAN & LE MANS

DVD AND DIGITAL HD, EONE

The legendary screenwriter (and mad sports fan) William Goldman tells a classic story about Steve McQueen complaining to his director about wanting a classic campfire scene in the cowboy movie they were shooting. When informed there was one in the script, McQueen insisted: "I don't want that kind of campfire scene. I want a *campfire* scene." McQueen could be difficult, befitting the world's biggest movie star that he once was, and that quality certainly comes across in this documentary about his vanity project, *Le Mans*. These kinds of making-of docs all aspire to the heights of *Hearts Of Darkness*, which detailed the absolutely sublime mess that *Apocalypse Now* devolved into. McQueen's film didn't quite plumb those depths, but trying to translate his revhead passions into cinema certainly strained the limits of his sanity. The film is remembered mostly for the footage – it pretty much lacked a plot, or dialogue for that matter – and the visuals collected from the 1970 race remain utterly compelling.

– JC ★★





● Think Nimbin goes Quaker; Germaine Greer meets the Ladies' Auxiliary; Oasis plays the Temperance Society; and you have some idea of how St Kilda Sports Club sits in the world of bowls ... Ancient trundlers at the club communicate as they did 50 years ago, when the wives they come here to get away from still had that vivacious sparkle to match their diamante necklaces. But the generations after them are coming back – some pushing 60 – sporting grey, greasy, rocker coifs; blokes in their 40s with mullets; spike-haired 20-somethings; and teens, who *really* bring the average age down. Dave is the vice-president. "Go to other clubs and they've got four funeral directors as sponsors. No good 'em comin' 'ere. Gotta wait too long on their return!"

High On Bowls by Bob Drane

● A more insidious deception has emerged recently, coinciding

with an apparent epidemic of positive tests over the last three years for a mysterious wonder drug called nandrolone ... What made these new forms of nandrolone a true doper's delight was the clearance time: you could sprinkle Andro on your corn flakes in the morning and know that you could pass any drug test just 24 hours later. When Mark McGwire, the St Louis Cardinals' slugger, revealed that he used Andro in his home-run-record-breaking 1998 season, sales of the product in America increased ten-fold ... There hasn't been a top-level competitor testing positive for nandrolone who has admitted they were simply using the new ingestible forms.

Nailing Nandro by Steven Downes

● Our lads have just delivered the most sublime thumping of the Windies that we'll possibly ever see. For anyone who remembers with chilling clarity

WHAT WE WERE SAYING 15 YEARS AGO (in Feb 2001)



the shoe being on the other foot, it was a glorious summer of Tests ... Each player has made fine contributions and it's been a terrific team effort. But there's also a strong feeling that "coach" John Buchanan has had a lot to do with this winning run.

State Of Play

● February: Lleyton Hewitt is named "Australia's least-admired sports person" for the second consecutive year. A fist-pumping Hewitt vows to hold on to his crown next year at any cost, stating he "would rather die than lose the title".

Fearless Predictions for 2001



● Then there's the Internet, which provides Australia's opportunity to snare a large chunk of the colossal international sports betting market. Last August our biggest operation, the Alice Springs-based Centrebet, established the first site offering tax-free fixed price betting on major sports within Australasia and around the world. Within days enquiries came from as far afield as St Petersburg and Mexico City. The first AFL wager was from an American who did his dough backing North Melbourne against

Geelong. Such offshore interest has sports bookies drooling ... Legal sports betting may have been a long time getting out of the blocks in this country, but it's rapidly reeling in the field.

The Big Plunge by Ian Cockerill

● "If a cricketer, for instance, suddenly decided to go into a school and batter a lot of people to death with a cricket bat, which he could do very easily, I mean, are you going to ban cricket bats?" – Prince Phillip, defending the rights of sporting shooters in the wake of Dunblane.

This Is What They Said

● Bear in mind that fan is a slang abbreviation of "fanatic", and a fanatic is a person with an extreme and unreasonable enthusiasm. But not every watcher is a real fan. Dandies of both sexes strut and preen, wanting more attention than the players. Gamblers are there to make money, satisfy an

addiction or prove their ability to pick winners. Parents watch because someone must. Workers need sport so they can survive. Opportunists are made up of politicians seeking to curry favour or bask in reflected glory ... In short, fans – us – are a mixed-up bunch. It is no wonder that champions constantly let them down.

Fans And Fantasies by Douglas Booth and Colin Tatz

WHAT WE WERE SAYING 19 YEARS AGO (in Feb 1997)

● Watching cricket live used to be such a pleasant, relaxed, civilised pastime. This year, however, the Australian Cricket Board's marketing honchos have deemed their own product so boring that it's necessitated the addition of inane and offensive effects over the PA system, allegedly to drum up some excitement ... Memo marketing gurus: it's a big mistake that will drive cricket lovers in droves from the ovals of the nation.

Winners & Losers



Parting Shot

Off the tee, just try to keep it between the two skyscrapers ... Englishwoman Charley Hull did a little city driving at the Dubai Ladies Masters, held on Emirates Golf Club's Majlis course. China's Shanshan Feng was the one who towered over the field, winning by 12 shots.







ILLUSTRATION BY Christopher Nielsen

FOOTY FASHION

WHEN IT COMES TO JERSEY DESIGNS, THE ONES THAT SELL THE MOST ARE OFTEN THE MOST SIMPLE. HERE'S CHEERS TO BLACK AND WHITE STRIPES AND A RED V ...

➔ **By now you've checked out the playing strip** that your favourite footy team will be wearing for the winter ahead. So, what's your verdict? If you're a Dragons fan or a Collingwood disciple (or an AFL supporter of almost *any kind*), the element of surprise is non-existent. And that's a *good* thing. It is no coincidence that the simplest and most traditional of jersey designs have survived the generations; no matter how much young blood is pumped through these clubs, the black and white, or brown and gold, or that famous Red V, will always be.

The importance of this, as far as fans go, is huge. Just as today's players enjoy the thrill and honour of wearing the same jersey as a Reg Gasnier or a Peter Daicos, so too supporters are passionate about keeping the club spirit burning by wearing the very colours their beer-swilling ancestors were draped in before the hill they used to stand on became a plush new grandstand.

And then there are the *other* clubs ... the teams who change outfits as rapidly as Prince or Madonna during a World Tour concert. Again, aside from the odd club merger or a minor redesign – or, in Freo's case, a complete overhaul – AFL clubs in the main have stuck to their founding strips. HOWEVER ... *they* are the ones who started all this alternate jersey business in the early 2000s when they began splashing club mascots and psychedelic swirls over their pre-season Cup singlets. Indeed, many Crows fans are *still* in a flap over the club's predominately white strip which features three sideways splashes, one for each of the club's colours. Adelaide isn't alone here though, with jersey collectors across the codes frothing with excitement over the release of each new Indigenous Round jersey or Anzac Day strip.

What is *really* quite, yeah, *that's* the word, *annoying*, for a stick-in-the-mud like your author is that the Marvel characters concept of jerseys which has crept into our footies is actually really popular among our younger supporters (shakes head in disbelief while typing).

What seemed like harmless, money-spinning fun a few years back has since spread like the plague, with rugby league clubs the most infected; Penrith is the most terminal case of late. Throughout their history the Panthers have never been afraid of altering their playing strip; in

the early '90s they went the whole hog and changed their *colours*, too. They are the polar opposite of your St Georges and Collingwoods, turning up in everything from their liquorice allsorts-inspired jumper, to a TEAL alternate jersey complete with a PURPLE shell-type pattern down the sides, to a PINK strip, which most argue really only works for charity games. In celebration of their 50th season, in 2016 they'll be honouring their past not in a Chocolate Soldier-inspired Royce Simmons/Brandy Alexander-esque jersey, but one featuring a giant panther jumping through a number 50 ...

Is it any wonder, then, that thousands of supporters quickly signed up to the Red and Black Bloc shortly after the Western Sydney Wanderers' birth a few years back? Once they saw that striking red-and-black-banded playing strip, and how striking it looked when *thousands of supporters were wearing it whilst jumping up and down in*

unison, it was only a matter of time before it began flying off coathangers across Western Sydney's Rebel stores.

It all goes back to that original point – simple is always better when it comes to the popularity of jerseys among fans. The *really* popular designs are the ones fans keep wearing even during their clubs' hard times, of which the Dragons, 'Pies and Wanderers have "enjoyed" their share of in recent times.

A decade or two back there was a theory going around that if you wouldn't wear your team's jersey to dinner, it wouldn't cut it with the modern, fashion-conscious footy supporter. But ultimately what footy fans are looking for in a strip is a piece of clothing that instantly weaves them into a collected history, one in which generations of fans have trudged, drunk and cheered before them.

Not that there's anything *wrong* at all with footy fans wearing pink ...

WHAT SEEMED LIKE HARMLESS, MONEY-SPINNING FUN A FEW YEARS BACK HAS SINCE SPREAD LIKE THE PLAGUE.



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